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2. TWO DOOR *answer* YOUR QUESTIONS

3. GODLIKE NOEL *supports* THE STONE ROSES

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New track verdict

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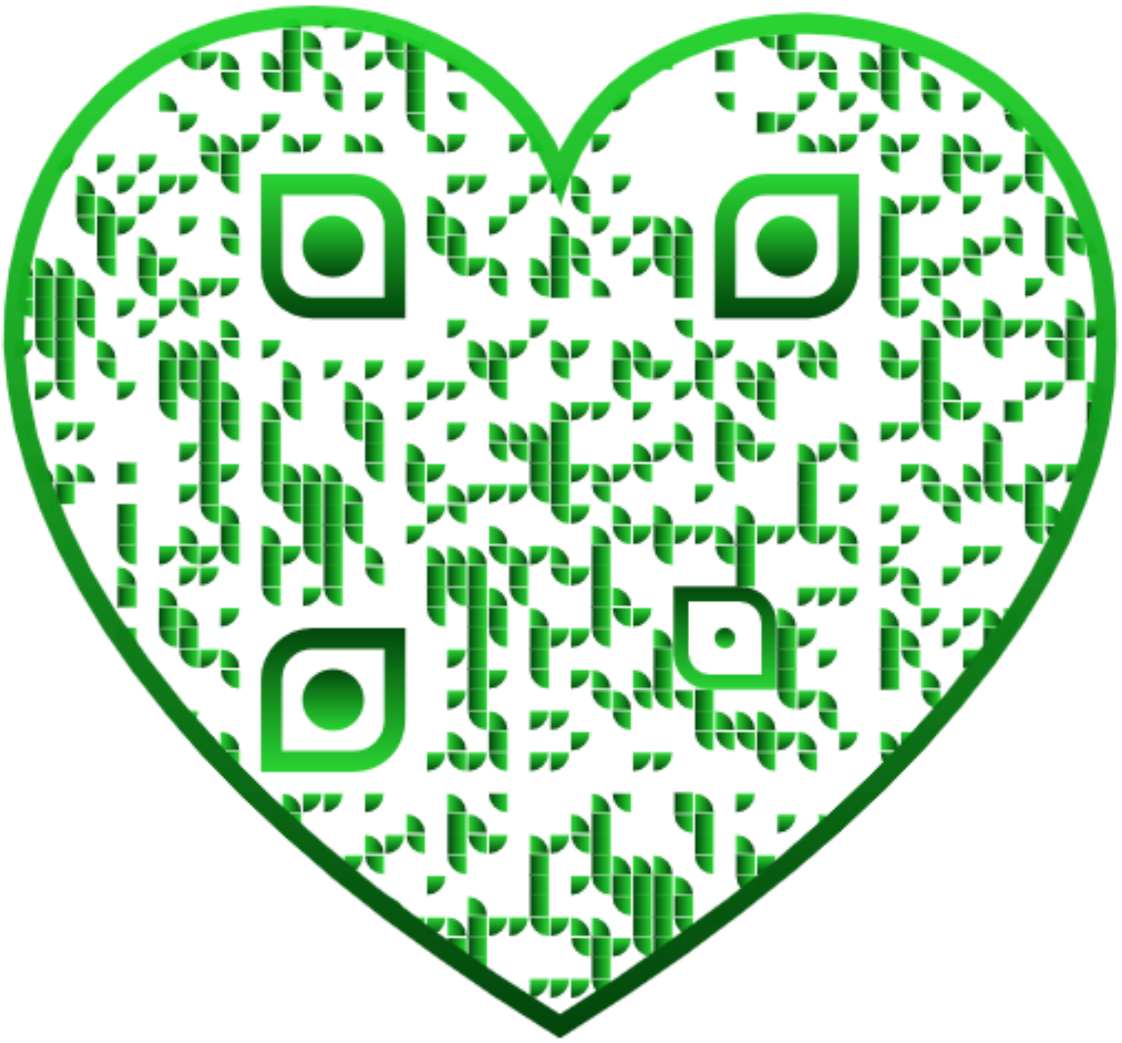

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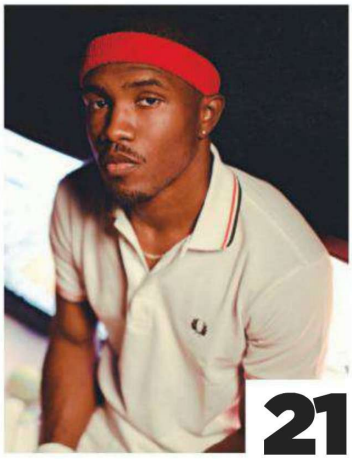

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"I DON'T HAVE ANY SECRETS ANY MORE"
FRANK OCEAN SPILLS ALL. WE REVIEW HIS ALBUM

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ON REPEAT

THE SOUNDS RATTLING ROUND THE SKULLS OF THE NME STAFF THIS WEEK

TRACK OF THE WEEK

THE KILLERS
Runaway

Well, it's good to know they're not fucking about. Four years after 'Day & Age' saw them dip their toe into dancier waters, The Killers make their grand return with the Killersiest comeback single you could ever hope to hear. And frankly, it's come not a moment too soon.

See, one of the great fallacies of The Killers' career is that 2006's 'Sam's Town' wasn't their best album. If 'Day & Age' was a stylistic reaction to the unjust critical kicking their second record took, then 'Runaway' is the sound of the band re-embracing their inner Springsteen – haters be damned. It takes a little time to get there – the chorus doesn't properly kick in for almost two minutes – but you know just where this one is headed from the opening line onwards: "*Blonde hair blowin' in the summer wind/Blue-eyed girl playing in the sand*".

'Runaway' is the sound of the band re-embracing their inner Springsteen

And when that chorus finally does arrive? Hoo, boy. Amid a crescendo of windmilling, Townshend-esque guitars, Brandon's tale of a dustbowl romance gone wrong transcends cliché, and instead enraptures you with the pure clench-fisted, bulgy-veined elation of it all. True, it's unlikely to satisfy those aforementioned haters, but that's their loss – this is pure Americanadrama as it's meant to be done. Altogether now: "*I knew it when I met you, I'm not gonna let you ruuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuun...*" **Barry Nicolson, writer**

HAIM
Honey And I/The Wire (Live at Daytrotter)

The Haim dames may have a ribald anecdote or two – witness last week's *NME* interview, in which they bawdily enthused about grinding down phalluses to stubs – but they're sweetness itself on record. These live sessions, with their giant spoonfuls of sun-blazed harmonies and butter-wouldn't-melt vocals, are a reminder of what makes them so great.
Ben Hewitt, writer

TNGHT
Higher Ground

The second emission from this new partnership between Scottish ooze-R&B beatsmith Hudson Mohawke and Montreal B-boy Lunice, 'Higher Ground' is – 'scuse our technical terminology – a certified banger: a hard synthesis of dancehall clatter, rude horn blasts and synths that zoom upwards like surface-to-air missiles.
Louis Pattison, writer

ARIEL PINK
Only In My Dreams

Get your Bermudas on, because Ariel Pink is back with some serious surf-pop action. The second track from the lo-fi king's new album 'Mature Themes' is a sun-kissed affair, with just enough disembodied "*ahhs*" and off-kilter harmonies to make this brilliantly trippy and, in his words, "retro-licious".
Jenny Stevens, Deputy News Editor

SUEDE
For The Strangers

It's fun here in the mid-'90s. Roses: back; Blur: new songs; Suede: making good on threats of new material. It's sparking an alternative timeline in which everything post-'Coming Up' never happened. Played at this year's Hop Farm festival, this is a lush and chiming paean, probably to love affairs that will never be.
Dan Martin, writer

ELLIE GOULDING FEAT TINIE TEMPAH
Hanging On (Active Child Cover)

She covered Elton John's 'Your Song' like a hiccupping kitten at the royal wedding, but this is more La Roux going for the kill (a good thing) than monarchy-pleasing waft. Another cover, yes, but with Tinie Tempah angstily snapping, "*I don't even know this fucking woman in my bed*". What do you think of THAT, K Middy?
Siân Rowe, Assistant Reviews Editor

KELIS FEAT SKREAM
Distance

Kelis, having boshed with Calvin Harris and David Guetta, is finally getting to meet the man who makes dubstep divas. The fruit is sleek as silk but snaps and clicks with a held tension, releasing into a chorus as spacious and stellar as Magnetic Man's 'I Need Air'.
Emily Mackay, writer

BLOC PARTY
Octopus

Ah, the great return – and this time beyond the standard-issue Bloc punk-funk there's a Russell riff that kind of *is* Daft Punk's 'Aerodynamic' hook. No bad thing. But do Bloc Party mean anything any more? This song firmly, definitely says, er... *maybe*, if there are a few on the new album stronger than this. We'll see...
Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

KANYE WEST FEAT PUSHA T
New God Flow

Kanye's forthcoming 'GOOD' compilation has to satisfy a lot of ears, and judging by this cut it's certainly going to. Pusha T goes toe-to-toe with his boss in cockiness, proclaiming "*I believe there's a god above me, I'm just the god of everything else*" before threatening to piss on someone with Grand Marnier.
Tom Goodwyn, writer

POND
Slow (Kylie Minogue cover)

Yup, it's Oz's finest doing Kylie's 2003 supermassive smash hit. It's actually pretty faithful until all hell breaks loose three-quarters of the way through and they all go totally apeshit. Sounds like they now have about 15 Big Muff pedals, through which they channel pure, unbridled Stooges-riffage.
Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

EMILIE BAILEY, VICTOR FRANKOWSKI

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UPFRONT

WHAT'S HAPPENED AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC THIS WEEK

Edited by Dan Martin

T IN THE PARK

THE 10 MOST EXCITING THINGS THAT HAPPENED AT T IN THE PARK

1 FLORENCE BECAME THE QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

MAIN STAGE, FRIDAY, 8.35PM

Florence Welch has never been one to lack a sense of occasion, and tonight's a triple whammy. Not only is it her third T In The Park and her first on the Main Stage, but it's also the third birthday of her debut album, 'Lungs', released on July 6, 2009.

"It's a really, really happy coincidence," Florence smiles backstage, "so we've sort of jigged the setlist around a little bit to add some celebratory 'Lungs' songs." It's second album 'Ceremonials' that begins the celebration, though, Florence slinking on like a fishtail-gowned woman possessed to rolling thunder sounds (the only we'll hear, to Florence's disappointment: "I was promised a monsoon! I like an apocalyptic scene to perform in front of"), turning her hands like a Thai dancer as the grand sweep of 'Only If For A Night' takes over.

Florence has never looked as totally comfortable as she does now. "I was spurred on by the 'Lungs' birthday, I listened to it on the way from the hotel here and it's actually quite a good album!" she laughed earlier, surprised at her own contentment. "With about a year's distance, I was like, 'Actually, I'm pleased with that'. Which is funny, because normally I never am!"

She breaks from her priestessly poise in the set for 'What The Water Gave Me', haring across the stage and giving way to a triumphant little shriek at the end. And then, 'Lungs" own 'Happy Birthday' comes in the form of a heavy, swing version of 'Between Two Lungs'. Florence thanks all those who bought the album "and got us here today", that slightly goofy grin cracking her goddess vibes as she points at her fans. Then she throws out 'You've Got The Love' early, picking the mood up before raising the stakes higher with demands of "human sacrifice" for 'Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)' (fortunately all you have to do for this particular ritual is put someone on your shoulders). Housey, hammered chords raise the song further up and Florence dashes down to the front row, grabbing hands and bouncing maniacally, finishing the song on a level with the crowd.

She wins further favour by revealing that her grandmother was Scottish, and recounting the story of a strange nightie-clad visit to The Big Pink's writing retreat in Lochgilphead – where it later turned out her grandmother used to holiday.

Meanwhile, new single 'Spectrum', 'Ceremonials" strongest dance moment, is a dark disco wonder, Florence hollering, "*And when we come back we'll be dressed in black! And you'll scream our names aloud*" like a club-queen valkyrie.

A ravey ending to 'Shake It Out' brings us to the rushing release of 'Dog Days Are Over' and the final rapture of 'Never Let Me Go'.

Earlier, Florence told us she'd love to tour with a massive choir, and tonight, the T crowd fulfil that dream for one night, bellowing along to their new queen.

"I definitely feel a kinship with the Celts in general," she tells us. "I think my Celtic heritage has definitely been embraced today. I like the kind of... there's definitely that kind of resilience there, isn't there? It's that mix of hard but emotional. The Celts are always the toughest but at the same time emotional – they'll always sing along. I've always been fascinated by battle hymns and things that sound like invading hordes. I don't know if that rings true with some of the ancient spirits of Scotland."

We don't know about the ancient ones, but the sentimental ones are stirred tonight. How does the T chant go again? "Here we, here we fuckin' Flo."

Emily Mackay

The 'umbrella' lasted 30 seconds

ANDY WILLSHER

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

The best thing about Flo?

VICKY
26, Alloa
"She's just phenomenal. Amazing stage presence, and the songs, and the words as well. She sings about the truth. She's a musical legend. The performances she's done the past three years, she's topped them tonight."

GEORGE
17, Alloa
"Their attitude, and the range of her voice. I'm a singer myself, so I just loved all of it – the way she went with the arrangements, and her voice was just fantastic. She puts on a show which proves to us that she cares about the crowd."

DANNY
34, Bolton
"My high point was just the whole show. Just Florence. For me, she's the weekend. I'm here with mates, but I only came because Florence was here. Forget the rest. I'm going to take her advice and go and get drunk now."

Florence's loyal Scottish subjects

Flo's stab at mime artistry is always well received

Florence kicks off her set with 'YMCA'

After all these years, SHM still haven't mastered Big Fish-Little Fish

2 SWEDISH HOUSE MAFIA SAID BYE TO SCOTLAND

NME/RADIO 1 STAGE, SUNDAY, 8.50PM

Comparing themselves to The Beatles might be simply inviting ridicule, but while there are no grown men weeping tonight (not for them, anyway), there's no denying the fact that Swedish House Mafia's final Scottish date before splitting feels like something of an event.

The music, if we're honest, has very little to do with it: SHM are house music's very own Snow Patrol – once undeniably good, now unbelievably popular, with the latter having not a lot to do with the former – but we'd be lying if we said they didn't know how to bring it for a festival crowd. You want jets of smoke? Check. Lasers? Piece of piss. Fireworks? They fart them. People raving it up atop the Thai Noodle stall? Waaaaay ahead of you.

Basically, their set dominates the narrative of Sunday night, eclipsing even Main Stage headliners Kasabian through sheer ostentatiousness. Sure, it's slick and choreographed – "We've been counting down the days until we could come back here," they assure us, paying lip service to that old Scottish-crowds-are-the-most-awesomest chestnut – but as the man dancing in his pants and setting off flares would attest, it works a treat.

So farewell, Swedish House Mafia. We bow to your ability to make a field full of people do Big Fish-Little Fish for two mental hours.

Barry Nicolson

That's one helluva send-off

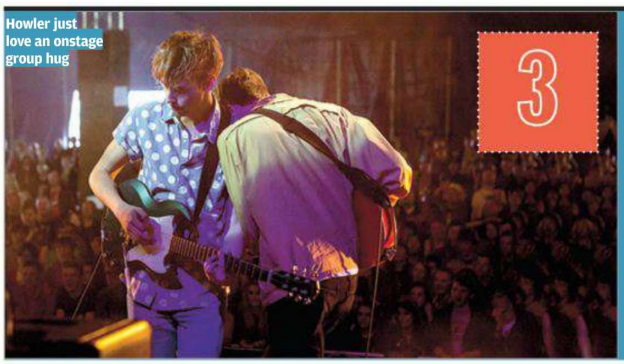
RAVE ROUND UP!

Example: "He's copying me, I got my leather jacket first"

David Guetta's arms have their own laser beam show

Dance music brings out T's dark side, but bosh merchants are going to be hard-pushed to match the levels of madness in the air. **Example** is in for the challenge, whipping up a frenzy with 'Stay Awake' on the Main Stage on Saturday. Not so physically exuberant but just as mad for it are **New Order**, headlining the King Tut's Tent with a set jam-full of pearls like 'Crystal', 'Everything's Gone Green' and 'Love Will Tear Us Apart'. Once the flooded Slam Tent opens on Saturday, **Benga** does a game job of heading up against The Stone Roses with his bubbling dubstep-pop. On Sunday, **Skrillex** does what Skrillex does. Also in King Tut's, **Calvin Harris** rules the crowd from atop a castle made of video screens and lasers. **David Guetta** closes up the NME/Radio 1 Stage with 'Sexy Bitch' and the Rihanna-featuring 'Who's That Chick?'. A final volley of firework seals the deal. Bosh.

Emily Mackay



Howler just love an onstage group hug

RICHARD JOHNSON

3 HOWLER LED THE US INVASION

TRANSMISSIONS STAGE, SUNDAY, 1.45PM

WITH SO FEW US acts on the bill at this year's T, Howler are here to represent, so a bit of American diplomacy is required. "I've got a Buck-tache," quips singer Jordan Gatesmith. "I've had Buckfast for breakfast." Ah yes, if there's one way to get a tent full of rowdy Scots on side, it's by downing so much of the loopy juice it leaves a stain on your upper lip. So with the crowd on board, the band bring it home with their canon of festival belters. You want rowdy anthems? You've got the brilliant 'I Told You Once' and 'Back Of Your Neck'. You want a wail-out? There's the brawl-y 'Back To The Grave'. A thrash-out, you say? An amped 'America' delivers. You want new songs? Ah, sorry, none here. That'll be next year's tonic.

Jamie Crossan

Two Door have a nice dry out onstage

4 TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB CONTINUED THEIR EPIC RISE...

NME/RADIO 1 STAGE, SATURDAY, 8.45PM

"This one should remind you of the summer," promises TDCC bassist Kevin Baird. "It may not look like it right now...". No, Kevin. It does not look like summer. It looks like boggy Hades. But if there's one thing that will revive frozen limbs, tired minds and muddy souls, it's the bright boost offered by a Two Door Cinema Club set.

This band are already huge, already beloved, and from the time 'Cigarettes In The Theatre' bubbles up through the gloom, it all starts to look a little brighter in the grey. And brighter in their future. Three songs from forthcoming album 'Beacon' are played. 'Wake Up' is a wholly effective melding of the TDCC sound with a retro-soul tinge. 'Settle' pushes them into the kind of territory The Maccabees have recently roamed so well. 'Sleep Alone' is melancholic but defiantly upbeat.

The forecast appears to be good for Two Door Cinema Club. "When I got here," says Alex Trimble, closing with 'I Can Talk', "it was wet and rainy and I wasn't happy. From the moment I stepped up here I just felt better and better and I'm feeling so good right now." Us too. *Duncan Gillespie*

...AND WERE GRILLED BY FANS

@CAITLIN_HOBBS

If you were all trapped on a desert island, who would get killed and eaten first?

Alex: "Sam's probably got the most meat."

Kevin: "He's probably the most nutritious."

Sam: "But I think I'd also be the hungriest first, if that's anything to go by."

@COADEE

Do you have any pre-performance rituals?

Kevin: "We have one of them, which is the high-five."

Alex: "Yeah, there's a high-five between all of us before we go onstage."

Sam: "Burning a virgin..."

Kevin: "Where did that come from? I used to like kissing our tour manager's bald head... he was kind of like a Buddha, but then when we were playing at hotter festivals, he started to get a sweaty head and I stopped doing it 'cos it was gross."

Sam: "Also, he's not completely bald, so it would get a bit spiky on the lips."

Alex: "Like 'tache rash."

Saturday is bin day in Kinross (l-r) Alex, Sam, Kevin

@CLAR_BAN

Who is the laziest in the group?

Sam/Alex: "Kevin."

Kevin: "I will admit to being the laziest. I don't think I've ever been on time for anything."

Sam: "You're very proactive, but you do like your sleep."

Kevin: "I'm a strong sleeper."

Alex: "You're great once you're awake, and you're given something to do."

Kevin: "I'm always smiling."

@CLAR_BAN

Are you sick of playing the songs from 'Tourist History'?

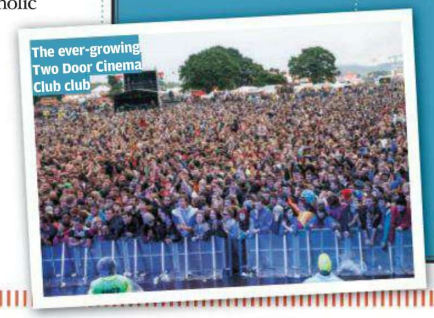
Alex: "We had quite a long break, maybe two and a half months where we were making the new record and we were only focusing on the new songs. Then we went into rehearsals for a week to just brush up on everything and started playing the old songs. I had this sinking feeling of, 'Oh no, not this again', but then the first time we went out onstage again, just seeing everyone else enjoy them made me get excited about the songs again."

Sam: "You're a giver."

@RENCHELSKI

What's the story behind 'Beacon'?

Alex: "It's to be left to interpretation really. We have our reasons and each of us have different reasons, so there's no definite meaning to the story."


The ever-growing Two Door Cinema Club club

Cup of T WITH

RYAN JARMAN
The Cribs

Ryan! Happy memories here?
"Yeah. In 2005 we headlined the Futures Stage. People crowdsurfed and got onstage, so the security guards began freaking out. People then started throwing the security guards into the crowd! It all got a bit heavy, but it wasn't our fault! That sort of anarchy makes me happy."

LIAM FRAY
The Courteeners

How are you feeling, Liam?
"I've been excited today. After we play, there's Noel then The Stone Roses. In 2009, we went on before The View and the crowd in the tent went ballistic. I've never seen a crowd like that before."

KYLE FALCONER
The View

Kyle, we always seem to see you here, don't we?
"Yes, it's a really good festival. We caught a bit of The Vaccines and they were great. This year we played as the Dryburgh Soul Band and we were the first band on. Normally we have to try and stay sober, but we were on at the very start, so we can enjoy ourselves."

JUSTIN YOUNG
The Vaccines

Justin, you came here last year too, what's changed?
"Last year we were in the tent, today we're faced with the outdoor elements, so we want everyone to forget everything and have fun. I want to get muddy – we're all in this together."

RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY WILLSHER, TOM MARTIN

5 ALABAMA SHAKES GAVE T THE BLUES (IN A GOOD WAY!)

KING TUT'S WAH WAH TENT, SATURDAY, 3.35PM

You might forgive Alabama Shakes' bassist Zac Cockrell for being a tad confused this afternoon. After all, isn't it normal to towel down *after* a gig is over? But there he is, ambling around behind the drumkit shortly before stage time, after removing his red mackintosh, wiping the rain from his face and gazing out into the crowd on arguably the wettest day in world history, post-Noah's Ark.

There are two notable things about the crowd he's gazing out at. Firstly: in it there are loads of people diving headfirst into the mud lake that's formed in front of the disabled viewing platform, essentially meaning that there's a UK version of *Jackass* unfolding as the band's warm-up act. And secondly: it's *huge*. The Shakes just love Scotland, they've said. And it seems that the sentiment is returned.

Still, it's a big win pulling off the set – most T In The Parkers' response to the biblically foul weather has been to get so massively fucked up that they simply can't feel the wetness any more, and Brittany Howard's heart-thrown-into-the-front-row soul requires proper engagement to enjoy.

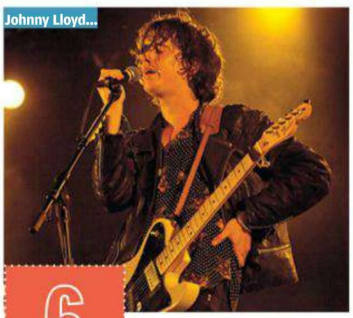
But they play it perfectly. At headline shows, padding out the set with rollocky 'Tutti Frutti'-style numbers more suited to wedding reception bands than modern-classic blues-rockers, things can get stretched. But with under an hour to impress, after a roots'n'roll opening climaxing with new song 'Making Me Itch', they concentrate on dishing out the fruits of debut album 'Boys & Girls', and it works.

Soon enough, the heavy thud of 'Hang Loose' is greeted by a sudden waft of weed smoke drifting across the crowd, and it seems to duly calm them before 'Hold On' ripples the tent walls and hundreds more pour in, suddenly raising the temperature in line with the gear-up onstage. There's a mini-lapse during the more subtle 'Rise To The Sun', but near the death, when Heath Fogg's churning guitars pile on top of Zac's thundering bass, everyone's clicked back in, and Alabamamania has officially spread as far as Balado Park. It's a triumph. And even more engaging than watching a grown man swan-dive into a pool of liquid filth. ***Jamie Fullerton***

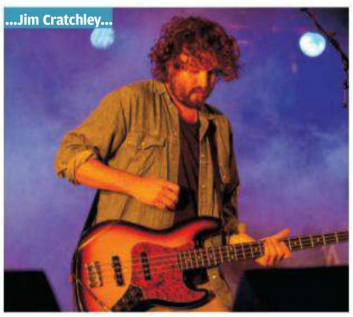
> A SUDDEN WAFT OF WEED SMOKE DRIFTS ACROSS THE CROWD AND CALMS THEM

Brittany Howard: the soul of Scotland

Zac Cockrell looks forward to a post-set jump in the puddles


Johnny Lloyd...

"Come on God... rain if you *dare*"
...Miguel Demelo...


...Jim Cratchley...

...and Dan White

6 TRIBES' SECOND PHASE BEGAN

TRANSMISSIONS STAGE, FRIDAY, 6.45PM

FOR THEIR T DEBUT, Tribes have a trick up their sleeves: a brand-new song. As it transpires, the Camden quartet have already written the follow-up to 'Baby' and our first taster is 'Get Some Healing', an Americana-flavoured spirit-lifter, complete with a can't-fail clapalong section.

"We start the album in September," frontman Johnny Lloyd tells us, "and we reckon it'll take about six weeks. It just felt like the right time to do it. We're excited about the songs, and we want to get them out as quickly as possible, mostly because we want to get back out on the road!"

In the meantime, the band tear through the best bits of 'Baby' with aplomb: there won't be a more apt summation of this weekend than 'Coming Of Age''s declaration that "*I wanna get drunk, leave my brain outside*", while a climactic 'We Were Children' sees Lloyd clambering into the audience, held aloft by the front row. The next 12 months promise much... ***Barry Nicolson***

TOM MARTIN, ANDY WILLSHER, RICHARD JOHNSON

7 NOEL SUPPORTED THE ROSES LIKE A GODLIKE GENIUS

NOEL GALLAGHER: MAIN STAGE, SATURDAY, 8.30PM
THE STONE ROSES: MAIN STAGE, SATURDAY, 10.20PM

Even a Godlike Genius plays a bum note occasionally

NOEL'S SETLIST

THE GOOD REBEL
MUCKY FINGERS
EVERYBODY'S ON THE RUN
DREAM ON
IF I HAD A GUN...
THE DEATH OF YOU AND ME
(I WANNA LIVE IN A DREAM IN MY) RECORD MACHINE
AKA... WHAT A LIFE!
TALK TONIGHT
AKA... BROKEN ARROW
HALF THE WORLD AWAY
(STRANDED ON) THE WRONG BEACH
WHATEVER
LITTLE BY LITTLE
DON'T LOOK BACK IN ANGER

We're just glad that you haven't lost it, Noel

Ian Brown: "Anyone for monkey tennis?"

Remember Noel's solo album press conference? When he said he was worried about having to assume the role of the frontman after all those years flanking Liam? That was one year and one day ago. And here he is now, on one of the biggest stages in Europe.

Considering his past concerns, he isn't half nailing this one – arguably the most pressured of them all, essentially supporting the Roses like Liam did at Heaton Park seven days ago.

His tactic is simple – his trademark confidence making it seem that this frontman malarkey is a cinch. While Liam's nostrils were flaring at the chance to play before Ian and co, Noel plays it like it's no biggie – crunching through the likes of 'Dream On', 'If I Had A Gun...' and Oasis numbers 'Little By Little, 'Mucky Fingers', 'Whatever', 'Half The World Away' and a beautiful 'Don't Look Back In Anger' with an effortlessness that suggests that while this set-up may be the product of circumstance, he's learned to thrive in it. Maybe it's the NME Godlike Genius trophy on his amp bolstering his resolve.

One man not needing confidence boosters is Ian Brown. Having smashed Heaton Park out of the, er, park last weekend, there's none of the initial nerves we saw early that Friday when The Stone Roses walk onstage. The atmosphere's different – there's nowhere near the sense of 'event', which means the Roses have to win on merit rather than by turning up and being The Stone Roses.

'I Wanna Be Adored' kicks things off in its own inimitable way, but things don't really gear up until 'Fools Gold' grooves in, paving the way for a flawless run, careering to 'I Am The Resurrection' via 'Waterfall', 'Don't Stop', 'Love Spreads', 'Made Of Stone', 'This Is The One' and 'She Bang The Drums'. "Nae bother," Ian shrugs as he monkey-walks offstage. Another Park conquered. *Jamie Fullerton*

8 ALT-J CREEPED THE LIVING HELL OUT OF EVERYBODY

KING TUT'S WAH WAH TENT, SATURDAY, 12PM

BEFORE ALT-J EVEN come onstage, things are very creepy. Are their fans really big into Train's 'Hey, Soul Sister', which blares out of the PA before stage time? Or is this crowd only here to shelter from the rain? Either way, if the huge cheers that greet 'Intro' are anything to go by, Alt-J have an odd group of devotees. 'Something Good' is a humdinger that bounces off each canvas spike, and 'Tessellate' beats away lingering hangovers. Finishing with a mood-lifting 'Breezeblocks', T In The Park's journey to their strange world is complete. *Jamie Crossan*

Alt-J bring the (fake) sunshine

AS IF LYNCHBURG DOESN'T GET HOT ENOUGH IN THE SUMMERTIME.

Come July in Lynchburg, building a fire taller than a man just seems downright crazy. But it's all part of how we make Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey. We harvest hard sugar maple from the hills and then carefully stack it into neat piles we call ricks. Once these are lit, the men in the rickyard tend to the ricks closely, spraying water on the burning wood so we end up with charcoal, not ashes. It is this charcoal we use for our unique mellowing process, which gives Jack Daniel's its distinctive taste. And it's also what makes Jack a Tennessee whiskey and not a bourbon. A difference that's certainly worth a long, hot day's work in the rickyard.

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Enter Shikari bassist Chris Batten braves the Buckfast queue

PABH's Tom Hudson even had time to film a post-hardcore Asda advert

9 ENTER SHIKARI AND PULLED APART BY HORSES HAD A MOSH-OFF

PABH: TRANSMISSIONS STAGE, FRIDAY, 8.05PM

ENTER SHIKARI: NME/RADIO 1 STAGE, SATURDAY, 6.05PM

As any old bore will tell you, rock'n'roll isn't about competition. Except, of course, when it is. So while the odds for the great TITP 2012 mosh-off are stacked against **Pulled Apart By Horses** – they're playing to a smaller crowd, on the festival's first (and quietest) day – the Leeds noisemongers come raging out of the traps with a bloody-minded drive and purpose.

Their opening salvo of 'The Crapsons' and 'Wolf Hand' see the first ripples of abandon slowly spreading among the crowd, but the craziness seems to be occurring in individual pockets rather than collectively. It takes 'Epic Myth' – and frontman Tom Hudson's declaration that, "If I had a decent-sized penis, you'd see something growing right now" – for the band's enthusiasm to properly catch on. And then, midway through set-closer 'High Five, Swan Dive, Nose Dive', comes the curveball.

"We don't want no circle pits," announces Hudson. "We want a dance-off!" And lo, to an improvised funk-metal soundtrack, that's exactly what they get. It's glorious. It's subversive. It's totally ridiculous. It's... PABH FTW?

Well, maybe. Owing to the weather, **Enter Shikari**'s set on the *NME*/Radio 1 Stage isn't exactly packed, but they're not about to throw in the soggy towel. Rou Reynolds' voice might feel "like a cross between a chainsaw and a cheesegrater", but that doesn't stop them giving it the full welly, leading to calls from the crowd for them to headline the entire bloody festival.

A bit hyperbolic, but there's no doubt the likes of 'Ghandi Mate, Ghandi' and 'Juggernauts' are capable of inciting proper carnage. Meanwhile, drummer Rob Rolfe's shameless crowd pandering ("Fuck off, ye English basturds!" he announces to his bandmates, in a so-so Scottish accent) does them no harm.

Ultimately, however, it might be slightly too dreich for Enter Shikari. You suspect they're glad to finish their set and ensconce themselves on the tourbus. In the end, for all the talk of moshageddon, it was the dance-off what won it. *Barry Nicolson*

PABH get distracted by Rou Reynolds' pasty legs...

Enter Shikari are duty-bound to do what the T-shirt tells them

TOM MARTIN

FIVE STEPS TO MOSHAGEDDON

TOM HUDSON, PULLED APART BY HORSES

ROU REYNOLDS, ENTER SHIKARI

1 OBSERVE MOSH ETIQUETTE
"Never leave a man down. Tie shoes tight. Take fluids."

1 HAVE FUN
"At festivals, you'll be spraying mud everywhere, so make sure you enjoy yourself."

2 PICK THE RIGHT SONG
"You need a tune with a good build-up and break down."

2 BE AWARE
"Mud might mean your legs aren't as quickly lifted as on concrete, so be prepared."

3 KEEP MOVING
"When in a circle pit, just move. And make sure it's in the right direction."

3 RESPECT ALL
"Some kids wanna bounce off each other, others wanna dance. Avoid confusion."

4 NO VIOLENCE
"It's gotta be rough, but also passionate. Respect your peers. Violence is a big no-no."

4 THEY'RE CLICHES FOR A REASON
"Scottish audiences are legendary. Be enthusiastic."

5 SHAME DISSENTERS
"Someone always takes it too far. If they do, shame them."

5 IGNORE 'THE MAN'
"If someone tells you to stop, like they told us once, ignore them."

LIANNE LA HAVAS

IS YOUR LOVE BIG ENOUGH?

THE DEBUT ALBUM OUT JULY 9TH

★★★★ Q Magazine

OCTOBER 11TH 2012 O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

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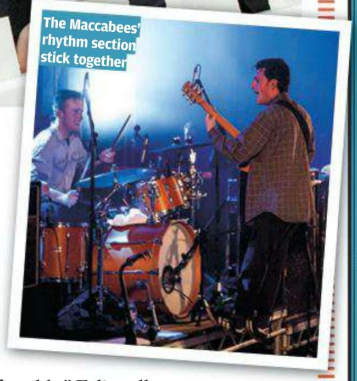
The T merchandise stall had one very happy customer...

10 THE MACCABEES GOT READY FOR AMERICA



The Maccabees' rhythm section stick together

KING TUT'S WAH WAH TENT, SATURDAY, 7.20PM

This spring, The Maccabees went to Australia for the first time. This autumn, they'll play their biggest tour of America, in support of old friends Florence + The Machine. They'll perform at Hollywood Bowl ("That's going to be incredible!" says guitarist Felix White) and Maryland's Merriweather Post Pavilion (the venue Animal Collective named their last album after – "I'm going to Mecca," says AC fan, singer Orlando Weeks). The turbulent glory of new tracks such as 'Forever I've Known' and 'Given To The Wild', resonant as they are with the likes of The National, are bound to make America hungry in return. Here are three reasons why they'll make the US love them...

1. THEY TURN ADVERSITY INTO TRIUMPH

The band arrive at T tired after sleeping on a German airport floor with half their gear delayed en route. "I was gonna come out and say all this stuff about, 'We had a nightmare getting here'," Orlando tells his mud-soaked crowd. "Then I saw the conditions you've been living with. Spirit. I'd call that spirit." Despite missing pedals, the Macs show their own spirit with a set harder and rawer than usual.

2. THEY'RE COMFORTABLE WITH THEMSELVES

"When we used to do big gigs, I felt overwhelmed, but I actually enjoyed Alexandra Palace, I felt comfortable," Felix tells us of the band's recent 10,000-capacity London show. "It just felt like, this is what we do." That self-ease is radiating from the stage right now, in the dizzy fun of 'Latchmere', flowing into the melancholic grace of 'Love You Better' and a jubilant 'Pelican'.

3. NO JOB IS TOO BIG OR SMALL

"This year," Felix says, "we could be playing a tiny club show in a far-out part of Europe and then... we're playing every type of show imaginable." Alexandra Palace gave them a shot at being a big-space band, with an oooh-lookie laser show, but they haven't lost their core skills. They sound fucking amazing. "For the people at the back with their pints – you have to make this a moment," Felix tells us. "But we're quite good at little gigs as well..." Little place called America, be ready.

Emily Mackay

"Don't look now, but we're being followed"

RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY WILLSHER

BEST OF THE REST...

FRIDAY

The Darkness open the weekend and, while entertaining, people's expressions read: "What was I thinking in 2003?" The highlight of **Snow Patrol**'s set are the soul-curdling screams that greet Ed Sheeran's guest spot – and act as a cue to leg it to **Tinie Tempah**, whose set is less well-attended, but infinitely more fun.

The Vaccines dressed to match the clouds

SATURDAY

Considering the biblical rain, **Childish Gambino** was always going to draw a big crowd, and he properly smashes it on his Scottish debut. Later, **The Vaccines** preview three new songs to a packed-out Main Stage, making a mockery of their secondary status to Jessie J. **The Courteeners** prove to be a big hit, with Liam Fray declaring like a fanboy that he's "off to see The Stone Roses later".

SUNDAY

They're not natural showmen, but **Bombay Bicycle Club** look comfortable on the Main Stage, where they entertain with 'A Different Kind Of Fix'. **Nicki Minaj** draws a huge crowd to the NME/Radio 1 Stage... then turns up an hour late. Her truncated set adds razzle-dazzle, but the crowd deserve better. **Kasabian** deliver with the pre-firework set, climaxing fittingly with 'Fire', then we're done. It's been wet. It's been loud. See you in 2013, T. *Barry Nicolson*

Kasabian's Tom brings himself to a climax

Thank You...

... to Lisa Faichney at Material Communications, and to Domino's Pizza for the grub.

For loads more news, photo galleries, stories and FUN, go to NME.com

Graham's just noticed Alex's shorts

Damon at Hyde Park, 2009

BLUR SING IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS

The band unveil new songs 'Under The Westway' and 'The Puritan' live on Twitter – and Damon isn't ruling out a new album

Everyone's eyes may have been on Manchester, but last week, Blur made their own low-key return to public view. On the evening of Monday, July 2, the band debuted their two new, heavily-teased new tracks in a show broadcast live across the internet via the band's Twitter stream, *@bluroffical*.

Damon, Graham, Alex and Dave played the yearning 'Under The Westway' – which was exclusively revealed to *NME* back in our February 25 issue – and its more screwball cousin, 'The Puritan', from the roof of their west London rehearsal space (see below for *NME*'s verdict). In between, they took part in an interview with their fans, also over Twitter – a Twinterview, if you will. Here's what we learnt.

Who needs a record collection when you've got '21'?

NEW ALBUM: WILL THEY, WON'T THEY?

Blur have been wriggling over the question of another studio album ever since they first reunited. After the performance, Damon, in an interview with BBC Radio 1's Zane Lowe, seemed to be warming to the idea: "When it feels good we'll do it. It just has to be natural."

THERE'S MORE OLD STUFF OUT THERE

The forthcoming '21' box set purports to be a complete haul of the band's recorded output. But that might not be everything after all. "There's still two boxes of cassette tapes I haven't gone through yet," tweeted Alex. "Prolly more." Pick up next week's *NME*, when we try to listen to all 21 discs of '21' in one sitting.

THEY *STILL* FEEL HEAVY METAL

Blur's Hyde Park warm-up shows in Margate, Wolverhampton and Plymouth promise to be "very loud and sweaty but not in a bad way," according to Alex.

THERE'S A SONG ON '21' CALLED 'SIR ELTON JOHN'S COCK'

The Sun quizzed the band for details of the piano man's nether regions. None were forthcoming.

HATCHETS HAVE BEEN BURIED

The Britpop wars are now a thing of distant memory – and with relations thawed, there's even a collaboration on the horizon. Kind of. Graham said, "I'm supporting Noel in the autumn."

THEY'VE STILL GOT OUTER SPACE AMBITIONS

Dave recalled that "we did try to play on Mars", which is partly true. In 2003, the Blur track 'Beagle 2' was sent up with the ill-fated space probe of the same name. Technical problems scuppered that one.

DAVE IS A MAN OF SIMPLE PLEASURES

"The view is quite magnificent," the drummer remarked of the band's largely concrete west London vantage point, before revealing that his favourite pizza topping is "plain cheese".

IN CONCLUSION...

It turns out that a Twinterview is perhaps not quite the next-level communications innovation that Blur's record label's online marketing departments might have hoped. But who cares? They're still making music... and that really is enough.

The verdict

Blur are back at their best, says NME's Barry Nicolson

If 'The Puritan' is one of those obdurate songs that encapsulates everything people both love and love to hate about latter-day Blur, then 'Under The Westway' must surely be the least divisive thing they've written since about 1999. It instantly warrants inclusion in any discussion of Blur's greatest songs.

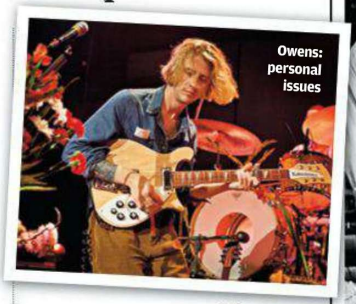
A sepulchral, smoggy-lunged ode to a London "*Where the money always comes first and the sirens sing*", there's a profound air of melancholy – and maybe even cynicism – in Damon's vocal that renders the song hopelessly ill-suited to Olympic celebrations, yet utterly heartstopping in every other regard. With its sombre 'Let It Be' piano chords and a heartsick melody, what '...Westway' most closely resembles is an elegy – partly to the ever-changing capital itself, but mostly, it would seem, to Blur.

Will there be another album? Or is this a final bow? If it is the latter, what a shame – but what a way to go out.

MARK ALLAN, ANDY WILLSHER

INDIE DISASTER #1
CHRISTOPHER OWENS LEAVES GIRLS

As the troubled frontman quits, NME's Jenny Stevens mourns the epic loss


Owens: personal issues

Anyone at Girls' last London gig would never have suspected this would be the last time they would see San Francisco's Christopher Owens and Chet 'JR' White perform together. The crowd on that sweltering night back in May knew they had seen something special. With 'Father, Son, Holy Ghost', Girls had written the album of their career, and backed with a roof-raising gospel three-piece, we'd just witnessed the gig of their career.

Which is why fans who'd followed their emergence from doe-eyed slacker popsters on 2009 debut 'Album' read the news of Christopher Owens' departure from the band with heavy hearts this week. "This may come as a surprise to many and has been an issue of much thought for me," he said in a statement. "My decision was not easy to make. I am leaving Girls. My reasons at this time are personal. I need to do this in order to progress. I will continue to write and record music. More will be announced soon. I thank you all."

Christopher Owens always kept his life and music honest, and was open about his troubled upbringing in the Children Of God cult, relationship breakdowns and drug battles. It was his ability to be so unguarded that enabled Girls to write about basic human emotions of love, loss and sorrow in a stream of brilliant pop songs. Whether Girls will continue without him is unknown, but whatever Christopher Owens does next, we'll be waiting.

Girls Power

AUGUST 2009: Girls play acclaimed debut UK shows
SEPTEMBER 2009: Debut album 'Album' released
AUGUST 2011: Owens admits: "I struggle with an addiction to serious, very heavy opiates."
SEPTEMBER 2011: 'Father, Son, Holy Ghost' released
JULY 2012: Owens announces his departure from the band via Twitter

INDIE DISASTER #2
ATP ON THE BRINK

Bankruptcy rumours circulate. Ticket holders demand answers

Festival organisers All Tomorrow's Parties were forced to reassure punters this week after apparently going into liquidation. Since 1999, ATP have organised artist-curated seaside jollies at Camber Sands, and in recent years Minehead, and the I'll Be Your Mirror festivals.

Kurt Vile: due at ATP

EMILIE BAILEY, PIETER M VAN HATTEM

Following reports that the company behind the festivals, ATP Concerts Ltd, had gone into liquidation, promoters issued the following statement: "To address the rumours, there are some changes currently happening within the company. However none of the scheduled events or future events will be affected. To reaffirm, there's nothing to panic or worry about, all future shows definitely going ahead, more info to follow."

Reports have suggested that a new company called Willwall Ltd has been set up to manage all forthcoming events, which include the festival at Camber Sands in December, curated by The National, which Wild Beasts and Kurt Vile are lined up to play.

"And this button will erase all of Radiohead's master tapes..."

"RADIOHEAD DON'T TALK TO US ANY MORE"

Jonny Greenwood used to love them. Not anymore, explain Grizzly Bear, as new album nears completion

Grizzly Bear's hotly tipped follow-up to their breakthrough album 'Veckatimest' is due to drop this September – and if new track 'Sleeping Ute' is anything to go by, it's set to be just as much of a kaleidoscope of swamping melodies and jam-packed instrumentation as its predecessor.

But they've no plans for a collaboration with their former touring partners Radiohead, despite guitarist Jonny Greenwood declaring the popular Brooklynite contrarians his favourite band when they supported Radiohead in 2008. "No, they don't talk to us any more," multi-instrumentalist and singer Daniel Rossen laughs when asked about a possible hook-up. "I'm sure it's nothing personal though."

Grizzly Bear have been so busy with their many production jobs and side projects – Rossen released his solo EP, 'Silent Hour/Golden Mile', earlier this year, while bassist Chris Taylor has been working his blissed-out synth outfit CANT – that even if Greenwood had called, they'd barely have had time to get together.

Not that it's detracted from the new material, insists Rossen: "Regardless of the success of the last record, we wanted to make this better than the last. There was certainly pressure on us for the follow-up – there were way more deadlines and schedules this time."

But hectic timetables have done nothing to dampen their unconventional approach to recording. "We like to find strange and inspiring places to work," Rossen says. They spent a month "way out in west Texas in this tiny old town", in an old army barracks – "that was a really weird setting" – before moving over to Rossen's family home in Cape Cod and then back to New York, where the album was mixed by Michael Brauer (pictured above with the band). "We work on a whim," says Rossen. "Whenever and wherever it feels right."

And while we can still expect some pop bangers reminiscent of 'Two Weeks' on the new record, he insists it will definitely be a more grown-up piece of work: "We tried to be more cohesive on this album. We had a little bit more control – we don't just necessarily feel the need to throw, like, 15-part harmonies on every single song!"

THE DETAILS

TITLE: TBC
RECORDED: Texas, Cape Cod, New York
SONGS FOR INCLUSION: 'Sleeping Ute', 'A Simple Answer', 'Sun In Your Eyes'
RELEASED: September 17
LABEL: Warp

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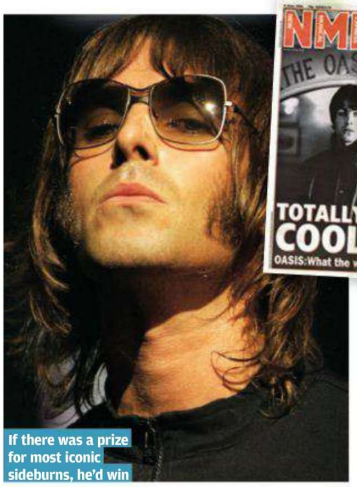
NME 60 YEARS OF NEW MUSIC

ULTIMATE ICON: THE SEMI-FINALS!

It's the last chance to have your say as we ask NME readers to pick the ultimate star of the last 60 years. Liam, Lennon, Alex or Bowie? You decide...

You've voted in your tens of thousands, and now we're getting to the final countdown in our search for *NME*'s Ultimate Icon. As part of our 60th birthday celebrations, we've been asking you to decide who you think is the most inspiring, divisive, awesome, charismatic, controversial and downright brilliant musician of our lifetime. From a longlist of 60, we've seen some gigantic names fall by the wayside – sorry, Kurt, see ya Jimi, maybe next time PJ. But we think you'll agree that our semi-finalists are a formidable four. Here's the final run-down...



If there was a prize for most iconic sideburns, he'd win

LIAM GALLAGHER
NME'S BARRY NICOLSON *says...*

"No, he's not the world's greatest songwriter. But he is its greatest frontman, and as the volatile soul of the band who defined '90s rock'n'roll, Liam's swagger and bottomless self-confidence have inspired legions of imitators. He is the last of the old-school rock'n'roll stars, a man who seems to have been born walking the walk and talking the talk."

Liam says: *"I am a tender, beautiful and loving guy that happens to slap a photographer now and then because they get in my way."*

JOHN LENNON
NME's MARK BEAUMONT *says...*

"The most innovative songwriter of the 20th century. A man at the epicentre of the key cultural and social shift that shaped society as we know it today. An agitator, a dreamer and a talent who was investigated by the CIA, hounded by the press and ultimately murdered for actively using his position to try to change humanity."

Lennon says: *"If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there would be peace."*

To be fair, Yoko knitted some damn fine hats for John

The 'cockney spiv' look was relatively short-lived

DAVID BOWIE
NME's EMILY MACKAY *says...*

"You're talking about a career so vast and influential that in zoological terms, he's like a phylum to other rock icons' mere species. The biggest of beasts in the rock canon, whichever of his many guises you pick, from glitter'n'glam sexpot to Union Jacketed drum'n'bass dabbler, he never sounds anything less than wild."

Bowie says: *"I always had a repulsive need to be something more than human. I felt very puny as a human. I thought, fuck that, I want to be a superhuman."*

Alex is the only nominee who has a bionic finger

ALEX TURNER
NME'S HAMISH MACBAIN *says...*

"In theory, someone whose voice only made it onto record for the first time seven years ago competing with the other ridiculously big guns on this page is silly. That's testament to the unassuming brilliance of Arctic Monkeys' leader. No other modern-day songwriter can touch him for effortlessness in terms of lyrics or tunes."

Alex says: *"I feel like I should just flip out and do something crazy. It's boring when people tell me I'm really well grounded. I feel a little bit sensible? I don't want to be that."*

NME APP LAUNCHES ON SPOTIFY

This week, *NME* launches an exciting new hook-up with Spotify. Built as part of our endless mission to help you find the best in new music, it features our favourite recommendations, the pick of our reviews and specially curated playlists. You can find it by visiting the App Finder within Spotify itself.

NME.COM editor Luke Lewis says: "We're incredibly excited about our shiny new Spotify app. We want passionate music fans to access *NME* wherever they are – so it's fantastic that people can enjoy our new band recommendations, reviews and playlists right within Spotify. It's a perfect way to discover new music."

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EMILIE BAILEY, CORBIS, REX, GETTY

THE DEBATE

IS MADONNA TOTALLY PUNK?

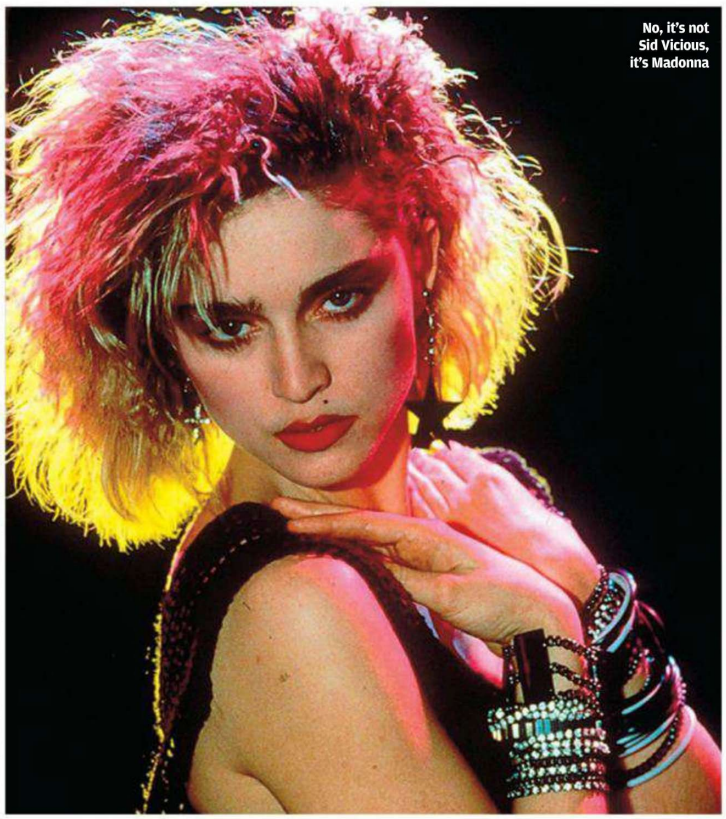
The MDNA Tour hits the UK next week, and NME's ***Dan Martin*** *reckons that means the return of a punk icon.* ***Emily Mackay*** *is having none of it*

DAN Oh, hi Emily. I've been a Madonna apologist for most of my life, but what pisses me off is when people make the assumption that it might have something to do with me also being a raging homo. It really isn't. I like to identify as a punk rocker, and so this unhealthy obsession is really to do with artists who take a flame-thrower to the expectations of what they're meant to be according to their class, their gender, their religion, and, yes, their sexuality. It also helps if they have brilliant hair and fail to see to their roots properly. Madonna does all of those. She's totally fucking punk.

EMILY Punk? It's one of those words whose definition has been so abused over the years that I could probably write you a convincing argument that the Pope is actually punk rock. But it wouldn't make it true. Madonna can don a Vivienne Westwood-esque tartan punk skirt and play guitar, but it's just one outfit, one dress-up among many. There are numerous things to admire about Madonna, but her story of working-class Catholic girl dragging herself up by her ballet-shoe laces, training hard in classical dance before becoming one of the most savvy singers the world has ever seen, is a classic pop rags-to-riches story. We don't need to make her into a punk rocker to justify our love.

DAN No, we don't need to make Madonna a punk, we just need to accept that she is one. Otherwise it's back to all this 'she's been totally canny at staying up-to-date with trends' crap, and going on about how 'her greatest talent is her ambition'. Which is offensive and a bit sexist. Punk is about a desire to tear down convention; to use popular music for its noble purpose of kicking back at oppression and giving a voice to those without one. The way she's made a career out of rebelling against the Catholic church, pioneered sexual liberation and championed fag-haggery long before it became fashionable look pretty fucking punk from here.

EMILY See, I'd say that by dragging the word 'punk' so far from what it originally meant, you're the one sticking it in quote marks. Her rebellion against the church and her fiercely defiant sexual frankness are impressive, and certainly drew a lot from punk's



No, it's not Sid Vicious, it's Madonna

propriety-poking shock tactics, but it was a popification, a commercialisation of those values. And it's only grown more commercial and less dangerous as the years went on. The increasing desperation with which people tried to rationalise her tweed-clad lady-of-the-manor phase as a former working-class Detroit girl breaking into the territory of the landed gentry was laughable. Or singing about her lack of pre-nup on her newest, woeful album as if that's something we can all relate to. Yeah, well punk.

> *We don't need to call her punk to justify our love*

DAN OK, if I try to employ the 'Beyoncé bling' defence of ludicrous materialist bragging as some kind of feminist trailblazing, that really isn't going to work, is it? And there's definitely a sense that this whole phase has been set up with the prime directive of making as much money as possible – sidling up to the EDM craze, getting Avicii to support and all of that. She even admits as much – on the song 'I Don't Give A' – that the divorce from Guy Ritchie was very expensive for her. But that's also part of why this album is also the most, ahem, punk thing she's done in years, because – woeful singles selection aside – she sounds pissed off. Also, a Detroit rude girl ramming her way into the English landed gentry is totally punk. As is a 53-year-old mother of four calling her album 'MDNA'.

EMILY Oh god, 'MDNA'. I won't bring age into it because that *would* be sexist and ageist. Even a 17-year-old calling their album 'LOL, DRUGS' would still be a lame-oganza. Mind you, there is something great about her acting like a snotty teenager. Snotty teenagers were as much a part of punk's spirit as its cultural theorists, after all, if not more. But then... why get so precious and prostrate herself before the moral guardians when MIA sticks two fingers up at the Super Bowl? Rebellion's great as long as you don't shit where you eat, is that it?

THE BEST OF NME VIDEO.COM THIS WEEK

THE STONE ROSES AT HEATON PARK – HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?
http://tinyurl.com/cco4qks
Following the Manchester legends' first show at Heaton Park, we asked punters what they thought.

DAMON ALBARN THROUGH THE YEARS
http://tinyurl.com/cco4qks
Those new Blur singles have set *NME* off on a trip down memory lane – join us as we relive the highlights of Damon's career.

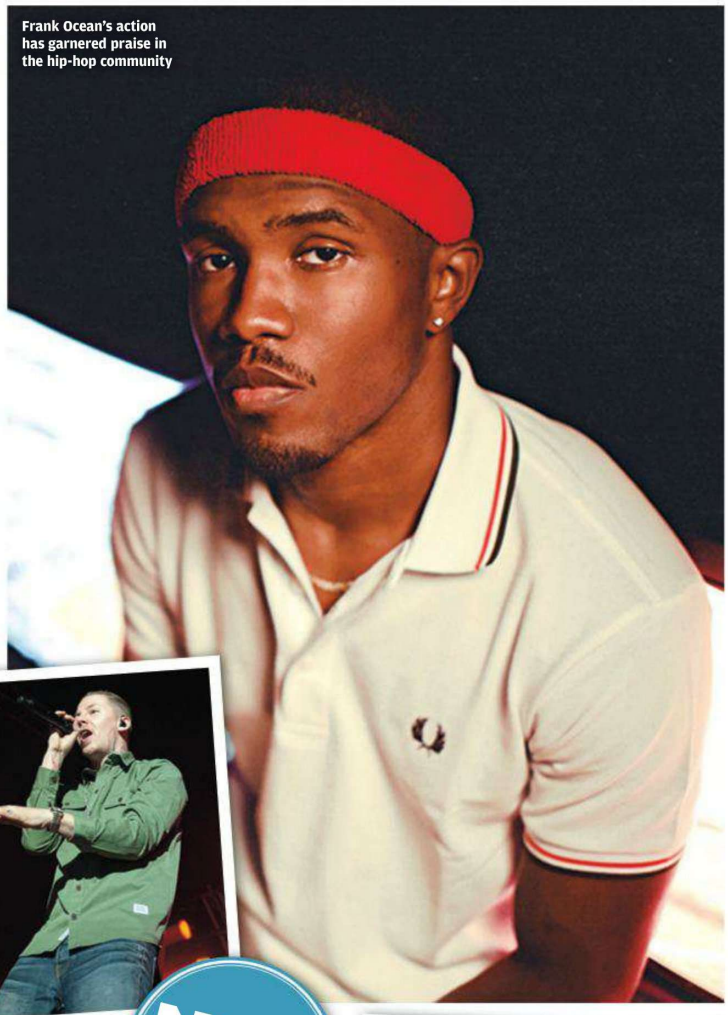
BLINK-182'S 10 BEST SONGS
http://tinyurl.com/cyo9qsq
Blink-182 are responsible for some of the most thrilling pop-punk anthems ever written. And here are our 10 favourites...

THE CRIBS – 'GLITTERS LIKE GOLD'
http://tinyurl.com/bmpz477
The latest single to be taken from new album 'In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull' is a belter, and the video is on *NME.COM* now.

REX

ODD FUTURE STAR UNVEILS NEW ALBUM WITH COMING OUT MESSAGE

Frank Ocean releases Tumblr statement speaking frankly about his sexuality



Frank Ocean's action has garnered praise in the hip-hop community

Frank Ocean made hip-hop history last week when he became the first major urban star to come out.

As speculation about his sexuality increased ahead of the release of his debut major label album 'Channel Orange', the R&B singer recounted on Tumblr the experience of falling in love with a man at the age of 19. Describing his journey to self-acceptance, he wrote, "I struggled to master myself and my emotions. I wasn't always successful." But he also revealed that he is now at peace. "I don't know what happens now, and that's alright. I don't have any secrets I need kept any more."

Figures ranging from Def Jam founder Russell Simmons to Boy George rushed to congratulate the bravery he has shown coming out in a genre notorious for its homophobia. Simmons said: "Today is a big day for hip-hop," adding, "I am profoundly moved by the courage and honesty of Frank Ocean. Your decision to go public about your sexual orientation gives hope and light to so many young people still living in fear." Ocean's friend Tyler, The Creator, often criticised for writing homophobic lyrics, wrote on Formspring: "He told me a long time ago. It was funny 'cos I was getting bashed as a homophobe or whatever and I kept saying, 'Dude, how am I one? I have gay friends – like, what the fuck, leave me alone.' Shit is hard for him but he did that."

The speculation is that Ocean's action will encourage other stars to follow suit. But rapper Professor Green (right) warned that there is a long way to go in the fight against homophobia. "Is hip-hop adult enough to deal with Frank Ocean's honesty?" he asked on Twitter. "It's a weird genre, often less about the music and more about the bravado and image."

FRANK OCEAN

CHANNEL ORANGE ISLAND/DEF JAM

NME VERDICT

Inventive and spirited, the singer's second LP is prone to overindulgence but shows a rare talent coming to terms with his ambition

'Pyramids', the diaphanous 10-minute teaser track from Frank Ocean's second album, 'Channel Orange', wasn't a one-off, it was a statement of intent. Musically galloping across genres (disco, prog, 8-bit) and lyrically teleporting us between centuries (from Ancient Rome to the Illinois strip club of the title) it represents the spirit of an album that sees Odd Future's resident R&B crooner ambitiously extend himself both vocally and musically.

The sonic arc of the fuzzy white noise of television static provides a recurring theme on the LP. A technological step up from the cassette player being fast-forwarded and rewound like we had on 'Nostalgia, ULTRA', these interludes double as a clever wink to another analogue time and space, but also to the timeless and genre-less nature of his astonishing sonic palette. Ocean is the ultimate post-internet artist, creating something new from the past, reappropriating it with such authority that its previous context is unimportant.

And so, after the relatively conventional album opener 'Thinkin' Bout You', we fall deep down the same rabbit hole that led to Ocean's version of Coldplay's 'Strawberry Swing'. 'Fertilizer' is about half a minute long, but loops and circles with a psychedelic charm akin to Prince's 'Paisley Park', with a chugging '60s rhythm and falsetto melody. Next up is 'Sierra Leone', which, with its dramatic Washed Out-like synths and cinematic sweep of strings, feels like a waking dreamscape. More conventional, but no less enchanting, are the 'Bennie And The Jets'-sampling 'Super Rich Kids', with lyrics that read like an episode of *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* scripted by Bret Easton Ellis, and 'Lost', an immensely catchy slab of skinny-tied new wave.

Fatally, however, Ocean goes against his dictum of 'less is more' in the album's last quarter. 'Pink Matter' is overblown (with its pseudo-Scientology line, "*What if the sky is for show and the aliens are watching?*" – eek! – and a guitar solo that is more laboured than enjoyable. The organ-heavy 'Bad Religion', meanwhile, feels as extraneous as the brief instrumental 'White', featuring John Mayer.

Despite these hiccups, 'Channel Orange' is saved by Ocean's undeniable brilliance at sonic plate-spinning. On his second album, his talent is not in question, but occasionally his ability to edit himself is. He might want to have a look at his tendency to indulge every sonic whim, but right now his ambition lies on the right side of indulgence. ***Priya Elan***

7

BEST TRACKS: 'Super Rich Kids', 'Lost'

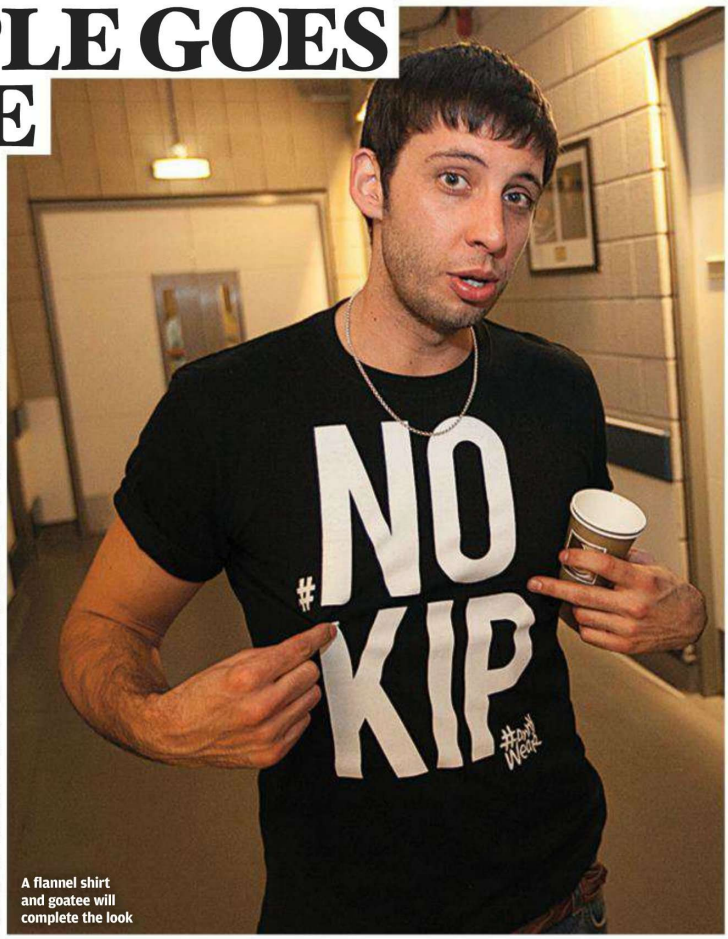
EARL AND TYLER IN THE STUDIO

Elsewhere on Planet OFWGKTA, returning Odd Future exile Earl Sweatshirt has revealed he's finally back in the studio with Tyler. Last week he tweeted that "me and Tyler finally doing music", suggesting that the pair's collaborative EarlWolf project might finally be in the works.

TOM OKLEY, NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX/EYEVINE

EXAMPLE GOES GRUNGE

Rave-pop is out, guitars are in for the gobby rapper's fourth LP



A flannel shirt and goatee will complete the look

Example might be a big deal now, but back when he first plied his trade around the venues of the UK, he had to deal with the occasional tough crowd. "I supported The Rifles – can you imagine me supporting them and their crowd? I was standing there with big stupid hair and a T-shirt saying 'Skinny jeans can fuck off', rapping to a load of Rifles fans. They were throwing everything at me, like, *bread*, fucking coins, it just made me want to perform even better and prove them wrong. I think I even got about two fans out of it. Those were the days. Someone pulled a fire alarm to try and get me off the stage, but I loved it, it was genius. It was probably one of The Rifles – like, 'Who invited this cunt on tour?'"

It was on bosh anthems like 'Won't Go Quietly' and 'Kickstarts' that Example built his stardom – which makes it all the more surprising that, for his next move, he's planning to revisit rock. Less than a year after 'Playing In The Shadows' ate the world, he's got his fourth record finished and ready for release in November. And he says it's every kind of rock music, all at the same time.

"It's very good," he informs *NME*. "It's like, every genre of guitar music. There's stadium rock, there's some more U2 and Coldplay moments on there, in terms of riffs. And then there's some grungy stuff, more like, Foo Fighters ballads. And then there' some more Green Day-esque stuff, then some Soundgarden-type stuff."

But fear not, ravers! "Everything's got a massive guitar riff, but then backed up by electronic drums and synth basslines, or dubstep sort of basslines. It's all pretty uplifting. That's the vibe and I'm happy with it."

He certainly doesn't fear any 'Dylan goes electric'-style backlash from his fans, either.

"I've played the new record to some people, some friends and radio DJs I respect, and they've all come back and said it sounds the most natural for what I'm doing."

NME EXTRA WIN PAUL MCCARTNEY 'RAM' LIMITED EDITION VINYL!

Get your hands on the rock legend's classic solo album in our competition

Macca's veggie meals are going downhill a bit

Paul McCartney has recently celebrated his seminal 1971 solo effort 'RAM' with a reissue package. We've got five special limited-edition vinyl versions of the album to give away.

The album, which contains popular Macca tunes like 'Back Seat Of My Car' and 'Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey', was issued to a selection of radio stations with alternate mono mixes. Since then, these versions have gone on to become highly sought-after as Macca collectables, and have only recently been released on CD. There's also a very limited vinyl pressing, and we've got five copies of that to give away. To enter the competition, simply follow these instructions:

HOW TO ENTER

Scan the QR codes on this page with your smartphone and get extra features, information and video footage.

1. DOWNLOAD A QR READER

Go to your smartphone's app store and type "QR reader". You should find several apps there. Download one onto your phone.

2. SCAN THE CODE

Launch the QR reader and scan the codes whenever you see them in the magazine.

3. VIEW CONTENT

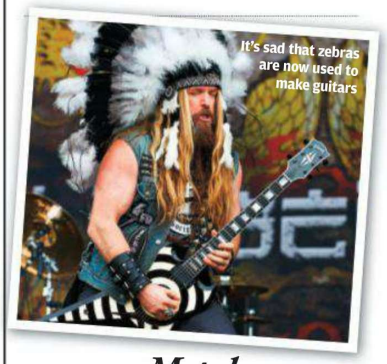
You will automatically be redirected to exclusive extras.

Mobile and/or Wi-Fi charges may apply. If you don't have a smartphone, go to *NME.COM/extra*. Competition open until midnight, July 17, 2012.

GOOD WEEK

The Stone Roses

Their albums rocketed back up the chart after their Heaton Park epic. And it's not even like they need the cash any more.


It's sad that zebras are now used to make guitars

Metal

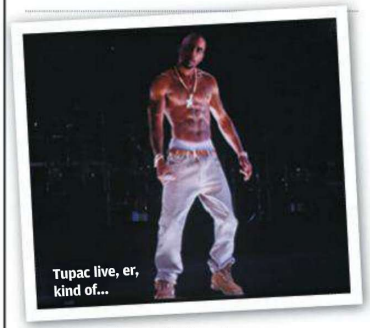
Zakk Wylde of Black Label Society has had a baby son. He's named him Sabbath. Sabbath!

Plan B

After months of tinkering, he finished 'iLL Manors' at 4.30am on a Tuesday morning.

Gotye

Somebody that we used to know? Nah, but the Aussie pop star had to take to Twitter to deny reports of his suicide.


Tupac live, er, kind of...

Festival holograms

The creator of the Tupac one said they would "never replace live performances".

Tinie Tempah

In the space of a single week he announced collaborations with both Ellie Goulding and Stereophonics. Ew.

BAD WEEK

GETTY, MARY MCCARTNEY, DAN DENNISON

Pieces Of Me
ELIJAH WOOD

Mr Frodo! The Lord Of The Rings star – and celebrity DJ – on his precious Prince records, High Fidelity, and how he never got to play Gollum

My first gig
SMASHING PUMPKINS AND GARBAGE, LOS ANGELES FORUM, 1997

"Garbage were supporting their first album and the Pumpkins were supporting 'Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness'. I've always been a huge Smashing Pumpkins fan – they were the first band I properly followed. You know you have that band where you're growing up and you follow everything that they do? They were that band for me. So that gig was a big deal."

My first album
PRINCE, 'BATMAN OST'

"The first CD I remember buying was the *Batman* soundtrack by Prince. Yeah, not his best record in retrospect but I'm a huge, huge Prince fan. It's not my favourite Prince album by any stretch, but buying it was a significant thing for me. It was the first time I'd invested in music."

The book that changed my life
NICK HORNBY, *HIGH FIDELITY*

"It's an amazing book but as a music fan, and as a guy, it feels so tailored to me and anyone like me. It's about a guy who's searching for relationships and understanding himself. It's about music and passion for music, and there's all sorts of wonderful musical references throughout. It seems like a book so perfectly suited to me as a person."

My favourite lyrics
JONI MITCHELL, 'A CASE OF YOU'

"Oh I could drink a case of you darling/Still I'd be on my feet" – lyrically the way that she personifies, or uses, a case of wine to describe how much of someone she can take in and how much she loves someone is just a beautiful metaphor."

My favourite fictional character
GOLLUM

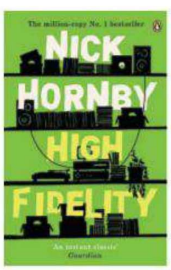
"For a long time prior to *The Lord of The Rings*, I would have said Gollum. I was reading *The Hobbit* when I was really young and the chapter 'Riddles In The Dark' was always my favourite chapter. But I wasn't disappointed not to play Gollum. I think he's definitely one of the greatest characters in all of those books and he was brought to life so brilliantly beyond whatever I could have imagined by Andy Serkis."

Favourite track to DJ
PRINCE, '17 DAYS'

"It's the B-side to 'When Doves Cry'. I've been DJing a lot recently, I have it on 12-inch but I also have an old 45 of it that I found recently. I love the song. It's a classic. It's unparalleled with how diverse it is – it's not really a folk song, it's not really a rock song, it's kind of about heartbreak but it's very uptempo."

Right now I love
AZEALIA BANKS

"I know I'm a little late to the party on this, but her track '212' blew my mind. It's a perfect song and showcases all of her abilities at once. You know, she sings beautifully, she raps with her own flow – it's both sweet and dirty as hell. It's a killer track and I'm very excited to see how she progresses as an artist."



Clockwise from main: Lord of the spins? DJ Wooden Wisdom, aka Elijah Wood; his favourite artist, Prince; '212' rapper Azealia Banks, swearing away; *The Lord Of The Rings*' Gollum, voiced by Andy Serkis; *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby; Canadian legend Joni Mitchell

REX, GETTY, DIANA LEVINE, JOEY MALONEY

MYSTIC GAV

*NME oracle **Gavin Haynes** looks deep into his pint glass to predict the events rocking the music world in the week ahead*

Wednesday
THE GOOGLE HAS LANDED

With the indie world reeling from Christopher Owens' announcement that he is leaving Girls, Owens will give his first post-split interview. In it, the tearful frontman will confess that he left the group because he couldn't cope with the search engine optimisation pressure of having the world's most generic band name – and more specifically, the need to constantly insert popular keywords into all of his interview quotes to get the group's website up the Google rankings. This, he will explain, was why in 2011 he gave a 45-minute interview to *Rolling Stone* in which he rambled continuously about Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga, Rebecca Black, *American Idol*, Kim Kardashian, the Royal Wedding, Apple iPhone, porn and Facebook.

Thursday
MUSE FACED WITH A WEE PROBLEM

With just hours to go before they are due to perform their Olympic song publicly for the first time, Muse are called to give a random urine sample. They test positive for anabolic steroids and whatever Lance Armstrong was injecting into his gluteus maximus in the '90s. After an IOC hearing, the UK will be stripped of its Olympic song poll position and the honour will then be given over to the second-place songwriters, Canada's Metric.

After giving a urine sample, Muse will test positive for anabolic steroids

Friday
CAMELOT OF NONSENSE

As Lana Del Rey and A$AP Rocky's Jackie O and JFK Camelot tribute music video is released, LDR will reveal that Rocky had no idea who JFK was, and she had to fib him into taking part by intimating that in playing "the world's most famous victim of a drive-by shooting", he was participating in a new Tupac biopic.

Saturday
GIRL PADDY POWER

With news that the West End is preparing to produce the Spice Girls musical, based on "the story of four young girls trying to make it in a TV talent contest", Ladbrokes will take bets on how many months it will be before Little Mix have hit the dumper and start auditioning for roles in the show. A separate accumulator bet will allow you to multiply your winnings by guessing how many other ex-Cowell contestants they'll each have to fight for a role.

Sunday
A DIFFERENT CORONER

Inspired by George Michael's new song about the time he nearly died of pneumonia, Shane MacGowan will rush-release a new song about the time he actually died.

Tuesday
ARRESTING BEHAVIOUR

As Snoop Dogg is arrested for marijuana possession in Norway, the country's police will arrest Björk at the airport for being a bit of a fruitcake, Antony Hegarty will be pulled in for being a bit effeminate, Noel Gallagher will be taken into custody in Oslo for writing words that don't make that much sense, and a fjord-dwelling bear will be arrested for woodland defecation.

Monday
CHRIS BROWN'S LATEST RING PIECE

In the aftermath of the news that Chris Brown and Drake have been offered $1million apiece to fight each other in the boxing ring by promoter Damon Feldman, Drake will counter by telling interviewers that he will offer a full $2million if Chris Brown will fight Wladimir Klitschko instead.

Birthday Runes

JACK WHITE (Born JULY 9, 1975)

Jack, I see you being eaten alive. It could be by jealousy. Or it could be by a crocodile. It's hard to tell. The problem with psychic visions is it's difficult to know when the metaphors are just that. Sometimes they're actually real events. Like that time I was sure Haim were going to be blessed with great success, but it turned out they just had a lot of white doves land on their heads. That vision was what got them their deal, so now there's some poor sap A&R man out there who's accidentally spent half a million quid on a non-metaphor. I feel sorry for him, obviously. But like I told him: buddy, the sign on the door says no refunds.

THE NME CHART

1	16	ALABAMA SHAKES 'HANG LOOSE'	Rough Trade
2	15	MAXIMO PARK 'HIPS AND LIPS'	V2/Co-op
3	1	KASABIAN 'SWITCHBLADE SMILES'	Columbia
4	4	LUCY ROSE 'LINES'	Columbia
5	11	POND 'MOTH WINGS'	PIAS
6	9	HOT CHIP 'NIGHT & DAY'	Domino
7	14	LITTLE COMETS 'JENNIFER'	Dirty Hit
8	2	BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB 'BEG'	Island
9	5	THE VACCINES 'NO HOPE'	Columbia
10	13	JACK WHITE 'FREEDOM AT 21'	Third Man
11	7	THE MILK 'EVERY TIME WE FIGHT'	UMG
12	NEW	MUSE 'SURVIVAL'	Warners
13	10	THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM '45'	Side One Dummy
14	3	ALT-J 'TESSELLATE'	PIAS
15	6	OF MONSTERS AND MEN 'DIRTY PAWS'	Island
16	24	RICHARD HAWLEY 'DOWN IN THE WOODS'	EMI
17	29	GENERAL FIASCO 'BAD HABITS'	Dirty Hit
18	17	THE TEMPER TRAP 'TREMBLING HANDS'	PIAS
19	21	LIANNE LA HAVAS 'IS YOUR LOVE BIG ENOUGH'	Warners
20	23	KYLA LA GRANGE 'WALK THROUGH WALLS'	Columbia

NME RADIO Hear the chart rundown first every Monday at 7pm on NME Radio NME.COM/RADIO

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

SAM TAYLOR (WWW.SAMTAYLORILLUSTRATOR.COM), JO MCCAUGHEY

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson

DAN DENNISON

ABOUT TO BREAK

THE CAST OF CHEERS

Dubliners ditch math-rock for good times – soon, everybody will know their name

"We arrived in Barcelona at 10am and found out that we weren't playing until 3am, so we went for a beer, which turned into loads of beers..." begins vocalist Conor Adams, with a rapscallion Irish lilt that makes his speech sound like a *Father Ted* script. "At soundcheck Kev [Curran, drums] was sliding off his stool, I'd basically forgotten how to play the guitar, Neil [Adams, guitar] quit the band about five times, and then someone came up and said John [Higgins, bass] had gone to hospital because his ear was chopped in two. He got back about 2.45am with a massive head bandage on, but what that story proves is that, no matter what, we'll play the gig."

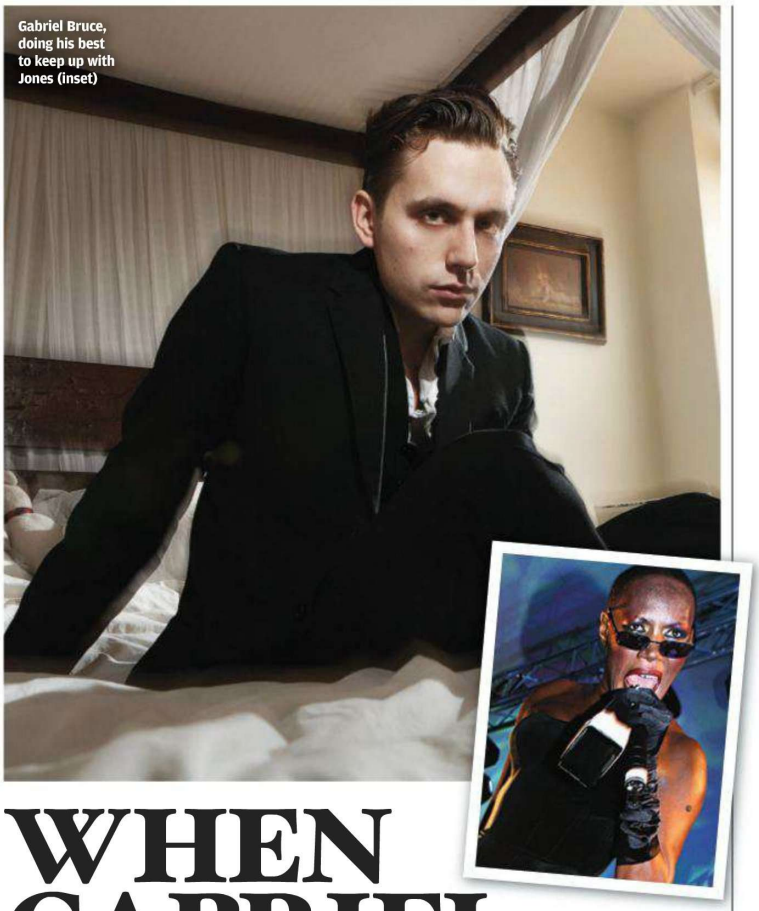
It's probably no great surprise that a band of Irishmen named after a bar ("We all worked in a pub called Cheers, so they'd call us 'the cast of *Cheers*'," Kev explains) have a penchant for the odd tipple, but rather than going down the McGowan route, this lot are simply all about the good times.

After playing in a host of clever-clever math-rock bands, the four-piece decided to set up in their current incarnation at the tail end of 2009. "This time we wanted something where we could consciously jump around and have fun onstage, make people dance," explains Conor's brother and co-vocalist, Neil. So far, so Foals. But while The Cast Of Cheers will certainly draw comparisons with the Oxford quintet, their frenetic but danceable sound is more wonky Everything Everything than it is proggy. It's a brilliant hotch-potch and one that fully comes to life live. Conor: "We started as a big ball of a mess on stage that hopefully bangs out a half-decent tune. We're still doing that, but now we have towels and water and whisky."

If you don't believe us, just ask Two Door Cinema Club. Or Django Django. Or Blood Red Shoes. They've all recruited the Cheers boys to support them, and with their first 'proper' album 'Family' due this month (a free LP, 'Chariot', received over 150,000 Bandcamp downloads last year), it seems the Dubliners could quite easily join the high-flying ranks of their headliner buddies by the end of 2012. ***Lisa Wright***

NEED TO KNOW

BASED: Dublin
FOR FANS OF: Foals, Everything Everything
BUY IT NOW: New album 'Family' is released on July 23
SEE THEM LIVE: At various festivals this summer, including Latitude (July 15) and Y Not (Aug 4)
ON NME.COM: New track 'Ghostly Queenie' and a 'Human Elevator' remix by Dawn Golden and Rosy Cross
BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Drummer Kev is a professional Irish dancer



Gabriel Bruce, doing his best to keep up with Jones (inset)

WHEN GABRIEL MET GRACE

Disco legend Jones set to work with London newcomer after hooking up over a Chinese

RADAR NEWS

Having your tracks remixed has been standard practice for aeons now, but it's still an A-grade rarity for a new artist's work to get a makeover from a bona fide legend. Enter Gabriel Bruce, the gravel-voiced London lothario who's somehow managed to snare the inimitable talents of disco/new-wave heroine Grace Jones on one of his new tracks.

Tasked with putting her own unique stamp on 'Zoe' – one-fifth of Gabriel's 'Dark Light Shine Loud/A Brief & Selfish Lover' EP – Grace's plans are still a mystery to all involved at present. "I feel a little bit uncomfortable because I haven't heard it yet," Gabriel tells us about the remix. "But people get excited about their babies when they're still in their bellies. I'm excited about this baby. I think it's going to be a strong, sexy little baby. It's going to come out of its mum like a bullet from a gun, straight onto that interweb, and blow some minds and break some hearts."

Originally invited to perform the track live as part of Gabriel's ongoing residency at Shoreditch's Electricity Showrooms, it soon became clear that something less constraining would suit the Jamaican icon better. "She does as she pleases," he explains, choosing his words carefully, "and it's somewhat hard to pin her down, so we decided to do something that's less specifically set on one time!"

A chance conversation between Gabriel's manager and Grace's producer, Ivor Guest, led to the pair meeting in person at a Chinese restaurant in London. "It was like I was a mere mortal in the presence of a demigod," Gabriel recalls. "It's rare to feel at once sexually and physically intimidated but I do know that Grace Jones could fuck me up. She could rip me apart."

Even with Grace's elusive nature, Gabriel's still hoping she'll join him onstage at some point soon. "That's my real dream," he sighs. "I'd drop everything and go on tour dancing behind her for the next year of my life. Who knows what the future holds?"

Rhian Daly

BAND CRUSH

Metallica's Lars Ulrich on his new favourite band

"There's a band out of the south of America called Baroness who are fucking next level. I was sent a copy of their new record and I was listening to it in the car this week. We toured with them in Australia and they played a lot of their own shows on our days off, and we went to every one. They're really fucking intense – these guys have the same kind of intensity and unpredictability as The Mars Volta. We are going to do everything we can to support them in the future."

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week

1 SAN ZHI

"Our name comes from a futuristic resort they tried to build in Taiwan in 1978 but never finished because of the scale of it. Lots of workers died while building it and what remains of it is apparently haunted." Meet Suraya (from Egypt) and Peter (from Bournemouth), aka San Zhi, who've been causing quite a stir around London of late. At present there are just a handful of songs online – melding anthemics reminiscent of The xx with the pop sheen that first got AlunaGeorge noticed – but the band tell us that new EP 'Ice Light' should be released by August. Live, they've just expanded to a five-piece, and you can catch them either in London (where a gig is tentatively planned for late July) or at Bestival in September.

2 TORCHES 'SKY BLUE & IVORY'

This London five-piece shine light into the crepuscular with a sinisterly tinged gothic sound akin to Joy Division, The National and White Lies. Charlie Drinkwater's operatic voice powers across a landscape of jagged guitars and rumbling drums on a track that expertly mixes tranquillity and hostility.

3 JAWS

If Bethany Cosentino wasn't an LA girl but a boy from Birmingham, she'd be fronting Jaws right now. The latest talent to emerge from the burgeoning B-town scene, their sun-drenched surf-pop shines with the blissfully laidback indulgence of youth. Almost enough to make you say "Swim who?"

4 THE DEATH RAYS OF ARDILLA

Not to be confused with DZ Deathrays, this Sheffield duo sound like they've been jamming in the same gene pool as Pond. Brothers Thom (vocals) and Nick Tietzsch-Tyler (drums) will release their 10-inch vinyl debut in August, but 'Daggers' is the one to check online before then.

5 SWIMMING LESSONS

Leeds newcomers Swimming Lessons arrive cloaked in experimental, cinematic soundscapes. Key track 'Hall' is awash with operatic vocals and booming percussion, sounding not unlike Panda Bear. Having previously supported Of Montreal, they're about to embark on their third support stint with Tune-Yards.

WORDS: SIMON BUTCHER, RHIAN DALY, DAMIAN JONES, ANNA CONRAD PHOTOS: RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY WILLSHER

SCENE REPORT

HUW STEPHENS' ONES TO WATCH

Blazing through the underground with Radio 1's new music overlord

What did the cheese say in the mirror? Halloumi. Right. I am excited about Latitude this year. I've got a whole load of great bands on the Lake Stage there, including Poliça and Lucy Rose. Someone else who's playing is a new acoustic dude called **Sam Airey**, who's from Anglesey but lives in and loves Leeds. I rate his songs a lot, they're deep and beautiful and sound effortless, and Sam runs his own label called Hide & Seek. The band with the tallest frontman in the world, **Race Horses**, are back with a new album called 'Furniture' via Stolen Recordings, and it's excellent, a really clever-sounding, joyous, infectious collection of songs. This is their second album but it feels like a new beginning for them. I hope the album will get the ears it deserves. Australia continues to rule with good music pumping out of there like a sausage coming out of a sausage maker. **San Cisco** I'm digging, their chirpy little numbers sounding good in the heat. They're over in October and I think they and Iceland's Of Monsters And Men are finding loads of new fans right now.

On the hip-hop front I like **Roxxxan**. She's an emcee from Birmingham who is hard and heavy, but with a nice sense of humour. Check her single, 'Too Fucking Facety' for a taster of what's to come. Moving on, I've just booked one of the more interesting guitar bands around, Outfit, for a session on the show soon. There's another band from the Double Denim stable I like, and that's **Amateur Best**. Their recent single 'Ready For the Good Life' is pretty special. Oh, and do check out Keel Her's music too, she's from Winchester and Tim Burgess is a big fan. Her tunes are a bit magic, and she's got a song called 'Enid Coleslaw'.

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST: Lee Spielman from Trash Talk

Huw's Top 5

SAM AIREY
'Floodgates'

RACE HORSES
'Mates'

SAN CISCO
'Rocket Ship'

ROXXXAN
'Too Fucking Facety'

AMATEUR BEST
'Ready For The Good Life'

5 To See

This week's unmissable new music shows

SUNLESS 97/ SOPHIE
Old Blue Last, London, July 12

SISSY & THE BLISTERS
Club NME @ Koko, London, July 13

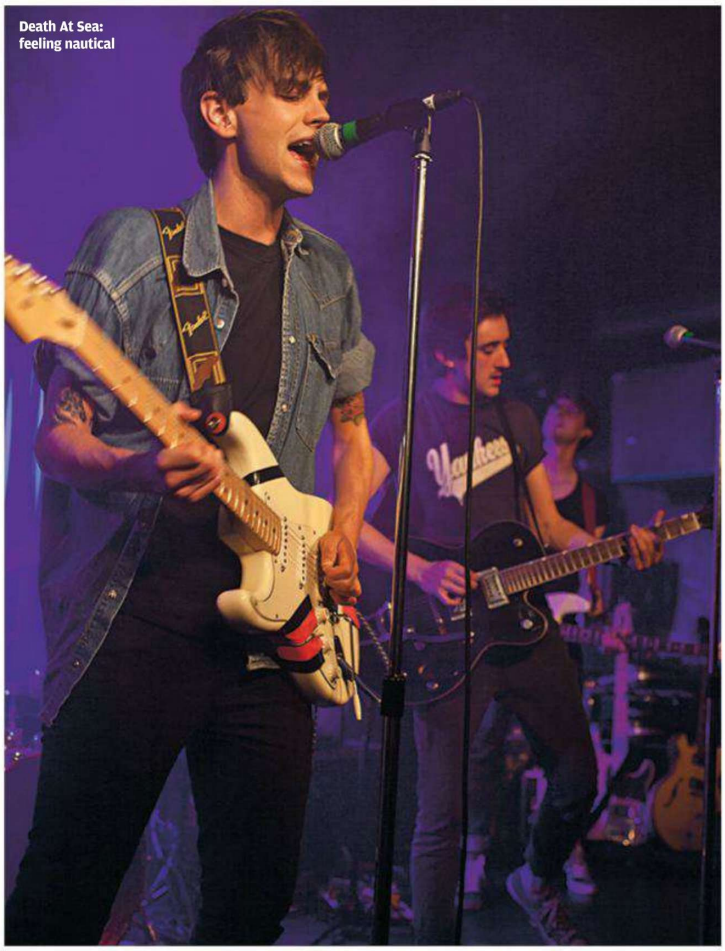
WOODEN SHJIPS/ STRANGE PARTNERS
Plug, Sheffield, July 13

DEATH RATTLE
Sebright Arms, London, July 14

PERFUME GENIUS (pictured)
Jericho Tavern, Oxford, July 14

Race Horses do their best 'Please Please Me' impression

DAN KENDALL



Death At Sea: feeling nautical

DEATH AT SEA

THE LEXINGTON, LONDON THURSDAY, JUNE 28

CAUGHT LIVE

If we learned anything from The Jesus And Mary Chain it's that you can make a righteous racket without having to throw out useful stuff like killer melodies and contagious hooks. Death At Sea have been taking notes. They're a scuzzy five-piece guitar band from Liverpool who write the sort of songs that pass the old grey litmus test: hours after hearing them they'll still be rattling around inside your skull, causing a general disturbance and brightening your mien.

They arrive in town tonight for what is, as singer Ralph Kinsella points out, only "gig number six" of their careers – and gig number one in London. They load up the stage with Marshall amps and crates full of nervous youthful excitement and then, with a jointly screamed "Yeah!", they're off, speeding into opener 'Crawl On Demand'. Ralph shares vocal duties with Sam Peterson, and the two already have the uncanny knack of weaving their lines in and out of each other compellingly.

They load up with Marshall amps and crates full of nervous youthful excitement

Carl Davies' drums propel them straight into the cracking 'Selfless', a delirious slice of honey-coated pop-rock built around the disdainful refrain: *"You're fucking bringing me down"*. 'Skinny Wrists' suggests they've been rifling through Stephen Malkmus' old stuff and are trying on his laconic drawl and love of an enigmatic 'wasted youth' lyric. 'Drag' is deservedly the track that's getting the band the most attention. It's dangerously catchy and will probably be the one worming its way deepest into your brain cavity.

However, on the night, the biggest-sounding tune might just be 'Sea Foam Green'. It's an ode to Merseyside that sounds like tidal waves rolling past the Liver Building.

Before the band play their final track of the night, Ralph announces: "Thank you for being so good to us, London. It's a long way from Liverpool." The pleasure was ours, and we think they might just be making that trip again. ***Kevin EG Perry***

Brass Wires Orchestra performing at Hard Rock Cafe, Lisbon

2012
HARD ROCK CALLING
Hard Rock

NEW GENERATION CALLING

From rising stars to rock stars – Hard Rock discover the new acts who'll play alongside Iggy and Soundgarden at Hard Rock Calling 2012 in Hyde Park

Festivals are great for seeing huge, big-name bands and rock heroes. You're screaming the words, sitting on your friend's shoulders and having the time of your life. But it's also one of the best places to find the future of rock and say you saw them first when they're the ones shooting confetti out of cannons on the main stage. That's why this year, alongside performances from Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Soundgarden and Iggy & The Stooges, Hard Rock are proving their dedication to new music with an entire stage featuring the best unsigned acts from all over the world. Found via the world's biggest battle of the bands competition, Hard Rock Rising, seven acts each night (July 14, 15, 16) have been specially picked by Steven Van Zandt of the E Street Band, Fyfe Dangerfield of Guillemots and James Walsh of Starsailor to play the Hard Rock Rising Stage. This is a new space at Hard Rock Calling featuring interactive installations, DJs, two bars and an exclusive chill-out lounge.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BATTLE

Over 12,000 bands entered this year's battle of the bands, with 841 competing to play a special slot on the Hard Rock Calling main stage. After 386 global events, the 86 local winners fought it out on Facebook to become one of the Top 10 and have the chance to be judged by music industry experts and world-famous artists. Classic rock group **Hey Monea!** from Cleveland were the eventual winners, with Lisbon folk eight-piece **Brass Wires Orchestra** and Indonesian rock band **FOS** from Jakarta also making the cut. "The calibre of artists competing in Hard Rock Rising 2012 made it difficult to pick just one winner," said judge Steven Van Zandt. "So we decided to take our three favourites to Hard Rock Calling and give them international exposure!" Keep an eye on *www.facebook.com/hardrock* and *www.hardrock.com* and check out *nme.com/hardrockrising* for details of next year's competition. Who knows, you could be playing with your heroes this time next year.

THE WINNERS

HEY MONEA!

Having toured the USA for the past seven years, swaggering classic rock, blues and soul three-piece Hey Monea! are ready take their records 'Wine, Women and Song' and 'Do You Wanna' out of Midwestern bars and on the road. "Cleveland down. Next – the rest of the world," they say. "We're off to London. Hyde Park here we come."

BASED: CLEVELAND, OHIO, USA
FOR FANS OF: BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
SEE THEM LIVE: OPENING THE MAIN STAGE AT HARD ROCK CALLING

You could see Iggy & The Stooges...

...and Soundgarden at Hard Rock Calling 2012

Smokin': Hey Monea!

Hey Monea! get all saxed up

Hard Rock RISING

Visit *www.facebook.com/hardrock* and *www.hardrock.com* for details of next year's global Hard Rock Rising.

"Sorry, mate, but you're kind of invading my space"

TOM: "THERE'S NO-ONE LIKE KEVIN ROWLAND ANY MORE."

KEVIN: "WELL, I'M NOT TRYING TO BE ECCENTRIC..."

Kasabian's ***Tom Meighan*** *told NME recently that his hero was Dexys legend* ***Kevin Rowland****. The least we could do was introduce them...*

WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT PHOTOS: ED MILES

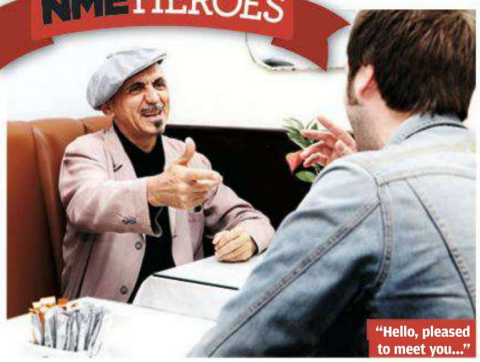
It's 10.30am in a café in London's St John's Wood, and Tom Meighan orders his first champagne of the day. "I'm a bit nervous, y'know," he confides, mentally shuffling his pages of interview questions. "I did interview McCartney once; that was pretty hard. He was telling us how, when John turned 70, he had a cry. He had a big bottle of wine and a massive joint and he cried for John. When he kept saying, 'When me, John and Ringo were in Hamburg...' and I was like, 'Fucking hell, wow!' But *this*..."

You can understand Tom's concern. Ever since he chose Kevin Rowland's cult 1999 covers album 'My Beauty' as his favourite lost album in *NME*'s special issue in February, we've been scrambling to get these two generations of rock eccentrics together. The thing with interviewing Kevin – the Great Soul Bard Of Birmingham, leader of fabled '80s troupe Dexys Midnight Runners – is that you don't know exactly which one are going to get. The moustachioed boxing coach Kevin of 'Searching For The Young Soul Rebels' who led his band in compulsory fitness regimes, refused to talk to the press and stole his own debut album master tapes? The raggle-taggle gypsy Kevin of 'Too-Rye-Ay' and 'Come On Eileen' superstardom? The reclusive wilderness Kevin who spent 11 post-Dexys years in a private shroud of cocaine and paranoia? Or the gender-snapping Kevin of 'My Beauty', flanked by a couple of burlesque babes, trussed up in a dinner gown and flashing his knickers?

Luckily, the Kevin who greets Tom warmly this morning is the debonair comeback legend enjoying a career resurrection, courtesy of new, lauded Dexys album 'One Day I'm Going To Soar'. He's stylishly clad in mauve and peach pastels, moustache trimmed halfway between Errol Flynn and East End spiv, and is nervous too – "you're a massive band!" he exclaims. But the pair hit it off immediately: Tom coming on like a Midlands Parky and Kevin modestly appreciating being slavishly appreciated once again. They may not be strictly Celtic, but they soon end up as soul brothers...

Tom: "How's things, Kev? Good to see you back, where you been?"
Kevin: "I just haven't been ready to do the music, y'know? It just wasn't ready."
NME: Had you heard of Kasabian before?
Kevin: "You can't miss them, man, massive band."

THANKS TO FEGO CAFFE, ST JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON


"Hello, pleased to meet you..."

"That suit's mental, man. Even Serge wouldn't wear that"

"I'm still wearing dungarees under here, honest"

"Kevin, what's your favourite Kasabian song?"

Kevin and Tom take a stroll in London NW8

THE LEGEND OF KEVIN ROWLAND

The life and times of Dexys' idiosyncratic frontman

The legendarily 'difficult' frontman of Dexys Midnight Runners, Rowland was a young soul rebel who kicked against the establishment, broke America in dungarees and descended into a deep drug addiction that crippled his career for a decade. Here's his trajectory:

1980
Named after the slang for northern soul fans' favourite drug dextroamphetamine, Dexys Midnight Runners hit Number One with second single 'Geno', a horn-blasted tribute to Geno Washington. Its parent album 'Searching For The Young Soul Rebels' was a cult and critical smash, buoyed by stories of Rowland dressing the band in boxer boots and training tops and forcing them to go on group jogs.

1982
Dexys returned with a new line-up and image – dungarees, gypsy neck-scarves, extensive body hair, fiddles, banjos and orange-crate bass – and folk-danced their way to Number One in the UK and US with 'Come On Eileen'.

1985
Dexys' third album 'Don't Stand Me Down' flopped thanks to a new worker-drone image and Kevin's refusal to release a single until way too late. It was the last we'd hear of him for a while as he descended into drug abuse.

1999
Signed to Creation, Kevin released a covers album, 'My Beauty', intended as a run-up to a new Dexys album. The cover, with Kevin posed in suspenders, was met with mockery, not least at Reading Festival where his set alongside two strippers was bottled short (see right).

2012
After years of speculation, Dexys returned with 'One Day I'm Going To Soar'.

Tom: "Especially on adverts and stuff, Sky Sports, all over it."
Kevin: "They're obviously working hard and I admire that ethic. I've been a lazy git for years, I don't know how you do it."
NME: How did you first hear of Kevin's work, Tom?
Tom: "We always played 'Come On Eileen' before our shows to warm us up – party tune, gets us going. That song was so huge at the time. I grew up with it. That's how I found out about you. But when you released 'My Beauty' in '99 there was a CD on *NME* and 'I Can't Tell The Bottom From The Top' was one of the songs on there, by The Hollies. When the piano comes in it's so emotional; it's on the verge, you can hear it in your voice. I thought, 'That's fucking amazing.' So I went out and bought the album. I love it, I love it."
Kevin: "It's so nice that you like that because it meant an awful lot to me, that record."
Tom: "Have the reviews of your new album been great?"
Kevin: "Yeah. To be honest, we'd be in the studio recording it and I'd be like, 'Shit, this is going really well, this is going *really* well – if we get this as good as it *could* be...' Because it's so easy to fuck it up. You can fuck it up at any stage, the recording, the mixing, even the mastering... I still feel each record is a miracle. I'll hopefully do a new record, but god knows how. The last thing you wanna do is do the same thing again. Do you find that when something goes right you feel blessed?"

"I STILL FEEL THAT EACH RECORD IS A MIRACLE"
KEVIN ROWLAND

Tom: "When you listen back to it, you know if it's great. It's a lovely feeling. Were you nervous, Kev, doing this record?"
Kevin: "I was, definitely. It was the first I'd done since 'My Beauty'."
Tom: "That was '99, I was 18! I'm 31 now, I got a kid!"
(At this point a waitress appears and Kevin declines Tom's suggestion of breakfast alcohol.)
Kevin: "I've used up my tokens..."
Tom: "You've been there. Was it really hard to quit?"
Kevin: "It's been a bit overdone, with the media. I had a problem with cocaine; I couldn't stop. I was doing it on my own for ages, that kind of caper."
Tom: "Can't go out without having a line..."
Kevin: "Couldn't get up!"
Tom: "I know the story, man."
Kevin: "Do you have a drink before you go on?"
Tom: "Hur-hur! I have a few Jägermeister shots. And I need a vodka Red Bull, but that's probably the worst thing I could ever have. Then we say a prayer; we put our hands in to say thanks for our health and our children and then it's a Kasabian show – let's go! Would I go sober? I can't see it now but probably one day it will happen."
Kevin: "I was in a punk band before Dexys called The Killjoys and I liked to have a couple of drinks before we went onstage. But what would happen in them days, there'd be three bands on the bill and we'd be thinking, 'We're on at 10 o'clock so about 9.15, 9.30 I'll have a couple.' Then the promoter would come in and say, 'Oh, lads, you're on at half 11. By the time half 11 comes, I'd be too pissed."
Tom: "Have you ever forgotten the lyrics onstage?"
Kevin: "I fucking have. Sober as well! The worst time was in Paris in the '80s. A song called 'I'm Just Looking'. It was going alright, then I realised all the audience were swaying and singing the words along. As soon as I realised they were singing, my mind went blank."
Tom: "Jesus Christ! I've introduced the wrong song at

the wrong time and the crowd go mad, then I go, 'Sorry, that's the wrong one.' It's happened."

NME: Do you see any of yourself in Kasabian, Kevin?

Tom: "Dexys don't belong to anyone. They had their own image; how they looked in the '80s, they were so separate. They did their own thing."

Kevin: "It's really nice of you to say that. I think we were on our own to our own detriment sometimes... we pushed that too far. But you're not resting on your laurels. You're always trying new things..."

Tom: "We'd never sit on the fence and do what we did before, it's impossible. The next record, I said to Serge, 'Why don't we do nine songs that are just electronic – no guitars, imagine that?'"

Kevin: "Is that what you're going to do?"

Tom: "Yeah, that's what we'd like to do, make it really dark as well. How does it feel, being back out on the road again?"

Kevin: "Nerve-wracking. I live like a monk when I'm on the road. The last thing, I was singing for two hours and 10 minutes and I didn't even know if I could do that. I'm always worried about the voice."

NME: Are there too many reunion acts swamping the circuit now though, Tom?

Tom: "If the band love it and they love each other then it's great, man, but when you do it for the wrong reasons it's different. When The Verve got back together at the end, it collapsed, didn't it? It's a risky thing."

Kevin: "Good luck to those guys who do that stuff, but to come back and do just a 'remember us?' – I'd slit my wrists. At our show we played the new album and then a few old favourites but there was only one single in there, the rest were album tracks, so we're not trying to pander to anything. We didn't wait 27 years to fuck it up or to cash our chips in and go and take the money now. We could've done that years ago."

NME: Do you see yourselves as two generations of great British rock eccentrics?

Kevin: "I think it's just being yourself. You're not thinking consciously that you're trying to be eccentric."

NME: Is Kevin one of a dying breed?

Tom: "There's no more like him any more, not like Kevin. There'll never be another band like them, never. They're all robotic, mate. I don't know what's happened in rock'n'roll. It's not what it used to be in my opinion. It's lost a lot of romance."

Kevin: "But you guys are experimenting, you're changing your whole style completely."

Tom: "We're trying, Kev, but rock'n'roll's lost its beauty. It's all programmed, innit? We're uploading photos every day – you've got to, you've got to get with the times, but it's lost its myth, rock'n'roll."

Kevin: "I think it has. I grew up on Bowie and Roxy Music. Bowie, each album's different. Roxy Music were radical, they sounded like nothing else – they sounded avant-garde, but had great tunes as well. A lot of bands just seem to keep going the same way. Once they get a formula, it's like a business."

Tom: "The same old festivals, the same old line-ups. Rock'n'roll was once about being a rebel and being edgy. We go against everything, we're on our own. You had a bit of a fucking shit time after 'My Beauty' and I'm glad you're back. You seem happy, mate."

Kevin: "I am, mate, I am."

Tom: "Shall we get drunk?"

Head to NME.COM/VIDEO to watch video of Tom and Kevin's chat

THE CLASSIC KEVIN CAPERS

Tom's hero has had some scrapes over the last 30-odd years

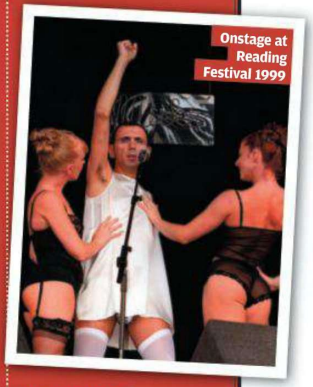
STEALING THE MASTER TAPES OF 'SEARCHING FOR THE YOUNG SOUL REBELS' *1980*

KEVIN: "We did have a really, really shit record deal. He said to me, 'Here's the contract.' It was 50 pages. I started reading it and it was like, 'the forewith, hereafter...' and I was like, 'Give us a pen.' He said, 'You're not gonna read it?' and I said, 'I can't understand it anyway.' That was before the days when they had to get you a lawyer. The thing with Dexys, we did like to create a lot of drama. We always seemed to have something to fight against – if it wasn't the music press it was the record company; we were always a little bit like that. In a way it united us in the early days but we took it a bit far, and once we did that to the record company, we held back the tapes, they weren't happy. Nowadays they'd just drop you."

That Jocky isn't funny any more

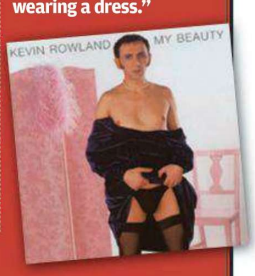
PLAYING IN FRONT OF A PICTURE OF DARTS CHAMPION JOCKY WILSON ON *TOTP 1982*

KEVIN: "We did this song called 'Jackie Wilson Said' [named after the famous soul singer] but we used to call it 'Jocky Wilson Said'. So when we got to *Top Of The Pops* that day we thought, 'Fuck it, tell them to put a picture of Jocky Wilson up there!' We thought it was hilarious but people didn't believe we did it for a laugh because we had a very serious image. As if one of us wouldn't notice a 20-foot darts player at the back of the stage!"


Onstage at Reading Festival 1999

WEARING A 'MAN-DRESS' ON THE COVER OF 'MY BEAUTY' *1999*

KEVIN: "I got a lot of flak at the time. I started wearing sarongs around 1995, four years before 'My Beauty', but people didn't see the transition, they just saw the finished product. I can understand people being shocked, but I didn't understand some of the flak. It must have hit a nerve with some people because they were vitriolic. It must've threatened them. I just followed my instinct. It wasn't cross-dressing, by the way. They always say that. I wasn't attempting to be a woman; I was wearing a dress."



"Bugger, I just can't find 'Slipway Fires'"

My Totally Enormous Record Collection

Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs' *Orlando Higginbottom guides* ***Louise Brailey*** *through the tunes that influenced his genre-hopping debut LP*

"Does this look like a big collection?" wonders Orlando Higginbottom, as he rummages wanly through stack upon row upon piles of records, sending little puffs of dust and skin cells into the air. "When I realised people were coming to take pictures, I was like, 'Maybe it's not big enough'." For a chap who's happy to name himself Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs, it's strange that he should be so struck with performance anxiety.

We're at Orlando's parents' house, a rustic, Aga-warmed abode owned by Oxford University. We're here to make sense of TEED's debut album 'Trouble', currently causing widespread bouts of shit-losing, head-swimming and limb-jerking. The strange collision of styles that defines the record – from jacking house exotica to peculiarly British synthpop via many, many co-ordinates in between – is writ in three dimensions in the snug home studio where it was written.

Or, more accurately, the garage that has been converted into a den which has evolved into a home studio, of sorts. There's a Rhodes piano obscured beneath a coil of insulation; exotic instruments and postcards perch on discarded equipment boxes; a CD-R labelled 'Lady Gaga's Parts' is pinned to the wall (he remixed 'Marry The Night' last year). Orlando's attention is drawn to the picture of Elton John on the wall: "Yeah, I love the fire behind the eyes in that one." And, spread across multiple surfaces, lots of tiny, plastic dinosaurs.

Orlando – the still, deadpan centre of a chaotic universe – is crouching amid the debris. "I just want to play you this album of Hebridean waulking songs," he explains. "I sampled it on my album. It's here... somewhere..." We've set him the unenviable task of delving into the depths of his collection to pull out six records that inspired 'Trouble' and offer some insight into the world of TEED (turn the page for the results). Sadly, he never does find the Gaelic folk record he was talking about...

Pile those albums up a bit more and we might not be able to see those horrible trousers

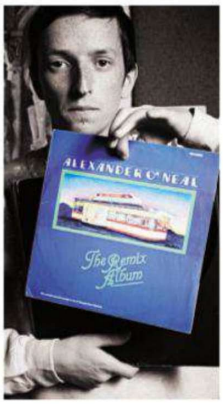
ED MILES, RICHARD JOHNSON

Beneath 'Trouble'

The records that inspired Orlando's album

The Hayden Andre Project 'Tribal Life' (1991)

Orlando: "This is not even a very good record. I got it in New York a year and a half ago. It's got a track on it called 'Tribal Life Original Hardcore Tribal Mix', and when I heard it, I wanted to call my album *Original Hardcore Tribal Mix*. It's just nine minutes of drum machines. I only got into this kind of music because I started writing electronic music. Before I started this project I hated house and techno. If you'd played this to a six-year-old me I would have thought you were a retard. I had high standards about what music should be. It took a while to get over that."



Cherrelle featuring Alexander O'Neal 'Saturday Love' (1985)

"This is an Oxfam bit of magic. It's produced by [songwriting/production duo] Jam & Lewis and in my eyes they're what producers should be like. Their catalogue is so broad; so many hits and so many artists that went nowhere, and all done with care. I like the songwriting style and I like the production style: early drum machines and live stuff put together when there was no divide. Melodically it has influenced a lot of my stuff. When I was a teenager playing the piano I would end up playing a bit jazzy, and now that ends up turning into stuff like this."

The SOS Band 'Tell Me If You Still Care' (1983)

"This was 10 dollars from somewhere in America. I really like the way these tracks are constructed – you can really tell that they know that they're making new sounds. I don't think people can really handle pop music like this, because it's really vulnerable, and it freaks people out a bit. But that's pop music, that's what songs should feel like: tender, like you want to listen to it at home. No-one makes pop music like this now, they wouldn't call it a pop song. All the drum machines and all the synths that are on that, it's exactly the same gear that started house music."

Brock-Out Crew 'Hardcore Romance' (1993)

"This is good because it's got loads of things I like: the pads that only came from about two keyboards, and the R&B samples, but I haven't worked out where they're from yet. Probably the first time I heard jungle was when my brother would come back in his car when I was in bed. I eventually got the cassettes off him, these tapes that were recorded from raves. Also, I went to church when I was a kid and two of my mates who also went to church suddenly found jungle. So Sunday was when we would meet at church, go for a cycle ride and find some jungle."

Orlando always takes his own homemade headrest with him when he travels anywhere

TEED TO KNOW

The Totally Enormous man at a glance

REAL NAME
Orlando Higginbottom

JOB
Making dance-derived, boundary-pushing electro-pop that's lauded by everyone from Hot Chip to Damon Albarn to Lady Gaga

CHECK OUT
Debut album 'Trouble'

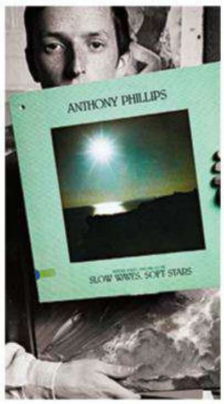
WHY ISN'T HE WEARING HIS DINOSAUR COSTUME IN ALL THESE PICS, EH?
Orlando: "I wear a costume at every single show, but I don't want to wear the same things every time. And it's not like I wear my costume in the studio..."

Grace Jones 'Slave To The Rhythm' (1985)

"It's just sick, basically because of the opening chords. If I could pick an atmosphere I'd love my music to have – that drama and magic – then it would be like the beginning of this record. I think sometimes Grace Jones' character takes over from her music. It's the music side of her that's really cool – she's so ballsy and so fearless and dramatic. I guess the most simple inspiration for me is when you hear something really great and it makes you want to do something really great. Just putting this on is a way to remember what magic in disco music sounds like."

Anthony Phillips 'Slow Waves And Soft Stars' (1987)

"This is something I found in a record shop in the electronic/experimental/classical area. I came across it by standing in a record shop and saying, 'Let's find something completely new'. I've been thinking a lot about how much time I spend on doing drums, so I would really love to write some music with no drums. Which I think is why I wrote that track 'Fair' on the album – I wanted to do something without any beats. We're all obsessed with the beat. We've been listening to the same drum beat for 42 years, so maybe it's time to do without."



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WE CANADA!

From protests to punk parties, electronic innovations to an engine-rockin' festival on a train, Canada's fizzing over with musical excitement right now. Let ***Jazz Monroe****, NME's man in Toronto, take you by the hand and guide you through its maple-leaved forests of sonic wonder*

The **five** most **exciting new acts** in Canada

1 DIRTY BEACHES

Alex Zhang Hungtai writes soundtracks and treads the dusty highways as a rockabilly singer-songwriter

FOR FANS OF: Suicide, Deerhunter, quiffs
WHAT'S THE STORY? Globetrotting songwriter who has three soundtracks bagged already. Well-travelled musically as well as geographically, he's currently exploring slow, filmic cuts influenced by *Angst*, an Austrian flick from the '80s: "It's about a psychopath killer who just got out of hospital, and already he's thinking how he can kill people," explains Alex.
BEST SONG: 'True Blue'

Q&A

***NME*: What makes Montreal different from the rest of Canada?**
"Well, it's different due to the Francophone population. But in the last decade, the scene has progressed. For example, my jam space, La Brique, mixes Francophones and Anglophones – we defy the tradition of segregation. And everyone's making cool shit that's fucking weird and not very conventional. So I feel like there's something brewing here."

Your fellow Montrealer, songwriter Sean Nicholas Savage, said that the city offers a unique creative freedom. Do you agree with that?
"The American scene is very cut-throat. In Canada, it's so small that no-one gives a fuck. We just reinvent the wheel and do things our way. Even if we're playing to five people, it doesn't matter. Whereas in the big American cities, everyone's like, 'Oh yeah? What venue are you playing at?'"

A life ring might be more useful here

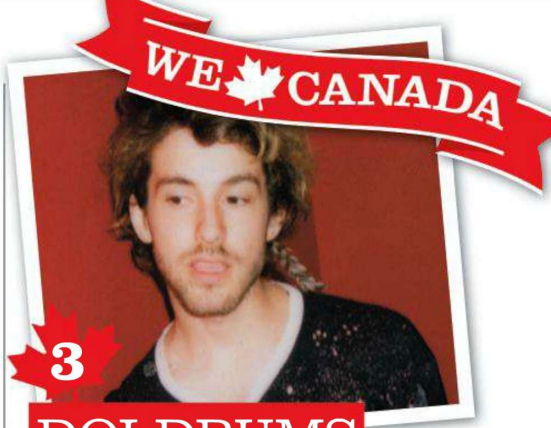
2 PURITY RING

With depraved lyrics nestling beneath their soft neon synths, these sick future-pop puppies are Montreal's weirdest buzz band

FOR FANS OF: Postal Service, Grimes, headless Barbie dolls
WHAT'S THE STORY? The ghostly, warped synth-electro of 'Ungirthed' was the first sign that Corin Roddick and singer Megan James had struck 24-carat cool. Out on July 24, debut album 'Shrines' slips sexually charged songs about drilled-in eyelids, "*detritioning bones*" and fractured skulls into their irresistible, future-pop textures.
BEST SONG: 'Ungirthed'

Q&A

***NME*: Do any Canadian scenes influence you guys?**
Megan: "There are local artists exploring some cool electronic stuff. Purity Ring was never part of a scene because we started getting attention before we'd played any shows. But we have friends all over Canada – you're probably familiar with [Radar picks] Braids. They're working on a new record, and it's really a departure from the debut. They're pushing some electronic production styles."
Relationships between Canadian artists seem to stretch across the country, which is cool – how come?
"The main reason is that there's not that many people here. It's a small, tight-knit community. When bands go on tour, they have to get someone to help them put on a show. So they discover scenes in other cities across Canada."



3 DOLDRUMS

Carnival-igniting maverick riding a sonic toboggan of rushing drums

FOR FANS OF: Milton Nascimento, Animal Collective, mid-afternoon absinthe
WHAT'S THE STORY? Originally signed to Souterrain Transmissions, Doldrums, aka Airick Woodhead, recently became the Grimes-signing Arbutus label's first new act since its 2010 inception. The hoodied youngster also unleashed the most unpredictable Toronto shows of the year.
BEST SONG: 'Jump Up'

Q&A

***NME*: You recently toured Europe with Grimes – how was the atmosphere?**
"I think it was partially cloudy."
Er, and what influences you right now?
"A noise artist called California Tape Collage, who inspired me to be braver in what I sample."
What's the Montreal scene like?
"Lots of small shows among friends – the Anglo arts community is crawling through the cracks of the Francophone and Hasidic Jewish communities. Living in warehouses, ecstasy is raining from the sky, and it's beautiful. Everyone has moved here in order to live their dreams out and be free."

SEAN NICHOLAS SAVAGE

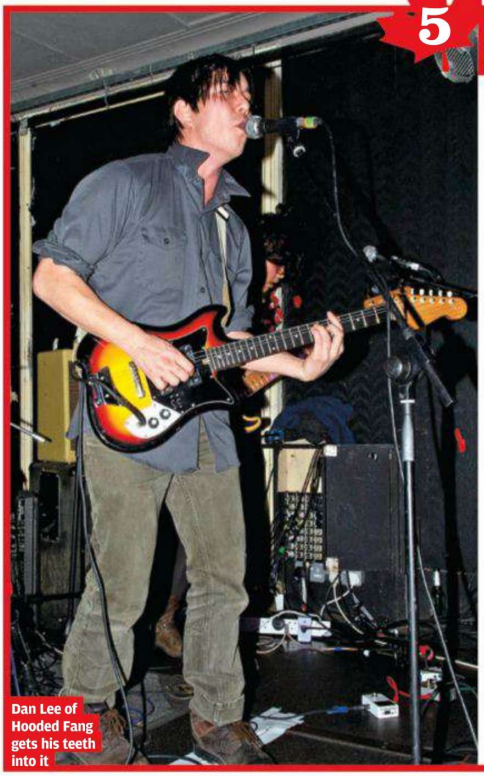
4

Timelessly melodic, Savage melts hearts with woozy sigh-chedelia

FOR FANS OF: The Cure, Perfume Genius
WHAT'S THE STORY? Montreal's best-kept secret has released nine records since his lo-fi debut in 2009. Latest LP 'Flamingo' sparkles like Elliott Smith hopped up on Arthur Russell's happy pills.
BEST SONG: 'Chin Chin'

Q&A

***NME*: You release lots of albums. Why the rush?**
"That's just how I like to do it because I get constant recognition at a low level. It keeps me driven."
Do the acts on the Arbutus label share any ideology?
"Freedom. Everyone has a good drive, broad tastes."
Are Grimes and Purity Ring a reaction to Canada's old guard?
"Yeah, trying to do something new. Although when you see, like, [Arcade Fire's] Win Butler around the neighbourhood, everyone gets excited. They're very respected in Montreal. But you gotta move forward."



Dan Lee of Hooded Fang gets his teeth into it

5 HOODED FANG

Clap-happy indie-pop that vomits up relationship blues and good-times yarns in equal measure

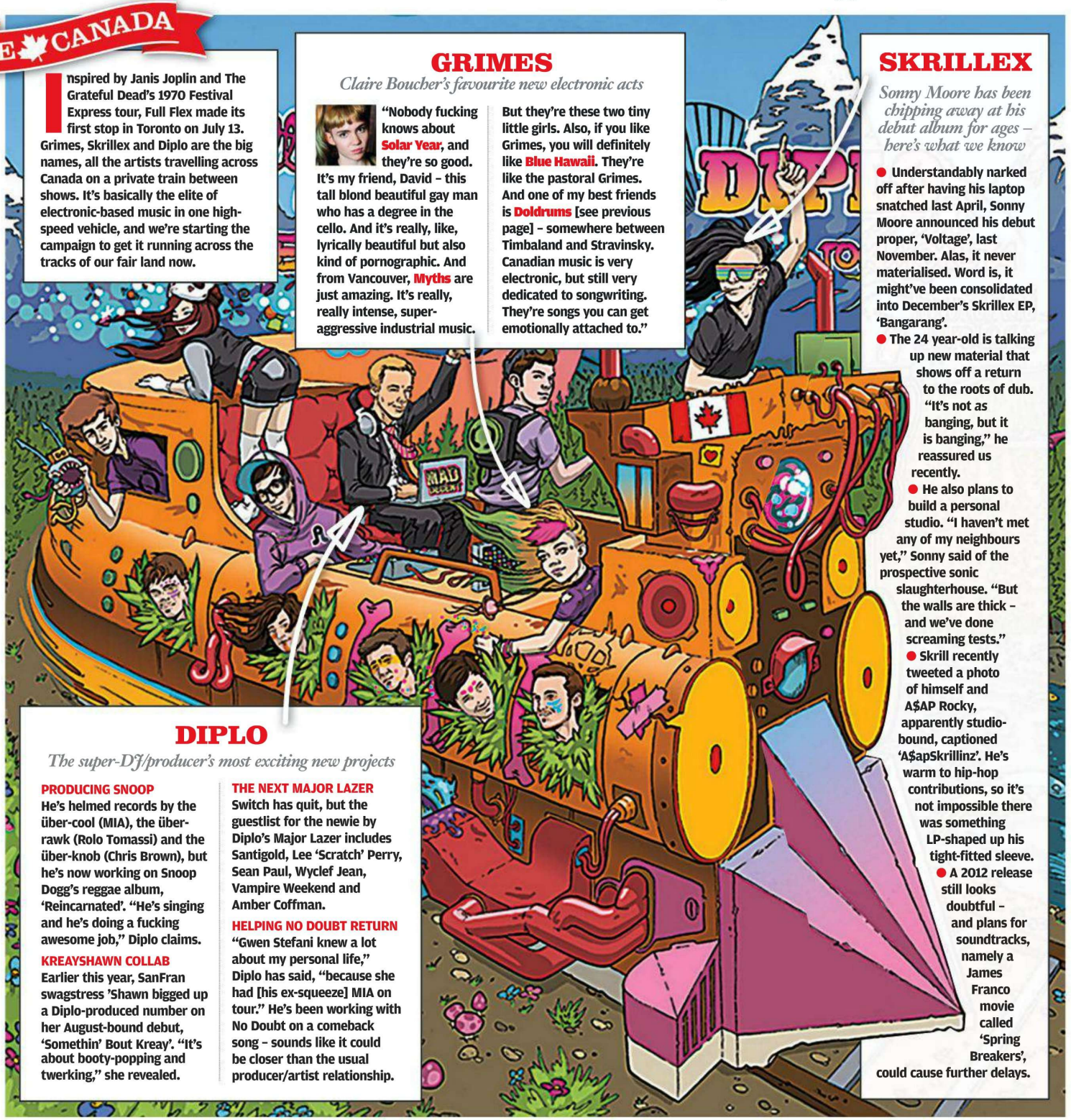
FOR FANS OF: Black Lips, The Strokes, naked beach parties
WHAT'S THE STORY? Hooded Fang may be the quintessential Toronto band. While the four-piece run their own label, bassist (and qualified teacher) April Aliermo also operates a community-based musical playschool, where she invites local musicians such as Maylee Todd and Kat Burns to teach, and gets the nippers to play on records.
BEST SONG: 'Clap'

Q&A

***NME*: Tell us about DAPS, the label you run.**
Dan Lee (singer):
"When we first started Hooded Fang, the band members all had different side-projects, too, and we needed a way to put out all our music. So we decided to save all our money from playing shows, till we could gradually afford to put out our own tapes and records. And then eventually we also wanted to put other people out – our friends from Toronto and the other musicians we'd played with."

If a **bomb** went off on this train...

...EDM might suddenly stand for Electronic Dead Music. Canada's first rail-based festival unites some of dance's biggest names



WE ♥ CANADA

Inspired by Janis Joplin and The Grateful Dead's 1970 Festival Express tour, Full Flex made its first stop in Toronto on July 13. Grimes, Skrillex and Diplo are the big names, all the artists travelling across Canada on a private train between shows. It's basically the elite of electronic-based music in one high-speed vehicle, and we're starting the campaign to get it running across the tracks of our fair land now.

GRIMES

Claire Boucher's favourite new electronic acts

"Nobody fucking knows about **Solar Year**, and they're so good. It's my friend, David – this tall blond beautiful gay man who has a degree in the cello. And it's really, like, lyrically beautiful but also kind of pornographic. And from Vancouver, **Myths** are just amazing. It's really, really intense, super-aggressive industrial music. But they're these two tiny little girls. Also, if you like Grimes, you will definitely like **Blue Hawaii**. They're like the pastoral Grimes. And one of my best friends is **Doldrums** [see previous page] – somewhere between Timbaland and Stravinsky. Canadian music is very electronic, but still very dedicated to songwriting. They're songs you can get emotionally attached to."

SKRILLEX

Sonny Moore has been chipping away at his debut album for ages – here's what we know

- Understandably narked off after having his laptop snatched last April, Sonny Moore announced his debut proper, 'Voltage', last November. Alas, it never materialised. Word is, it might've been consolidated into December's Skrillex EP, 'Bangarang'.
- The 24 year-old is talking up new material that shows off a return to the roots of dub. "It's not as banging, but it is banging," he reassured us recently.
- He also plans to build a personal studio. "I haven't met any of my neighbours yet," Sonny said of the prospective sonic slaughterhouse. "But the walls are thick – and we've done screaming tests."
- Skrill recently tweeted a photo of himself and A$AP Rocky, apparently studio-bound, captioned 'A$apSkrillinz'. He's warm to hip-hop contributions, so it's not impossible there was something LP-shaped up his tight-fitted sleeve.
- A 2012 release still looks doubtful – and plans for soundtracks, namely a James Franco movie called 'Spring Breakers', could cause further delays.

DIPLO

The super-DJ/producer's most exciting new projects

PRODUCING SNOOP
He's helmed records by the über-cool (MIA), the über-rawk (Rolo Tomassi) and the über-knob (Chris Brown), but he's now working on Snoop Dogg's reggae album, 'Reincarnated'. "He's singing and he's doing a fucking awesome job," Diplo claims.

KREAYSHAWN COLLAB
Earlier this year, SanFran swagstress 'Shawn bigged up a Diplo-produced number on her August-bound debut, 'Somethin' Bout Kreay'. "It's about booty-popping and twerking," she revealed.

THE NEXT MAJOR LAZER
Switch has quit, but the guestlist for the newie by Diplo's Major Lazer includes Santigold, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Sean Paul, Wyclef Jean, Vampire Weekend and Amber Coffman.

HELPING NO DOUBT RETURN
"Gwen Stefani knew a lot about my personal life," Diplo has said, "because she had [his ex-squeeze] MIA on tour." He's been working with No Doubt on a comeback song – sounds like it could be closer than the usual producer/artist relationship.

UNBROKEN SOCIAL SCENES

Canada's students are marching, and the bands are behind them

It's all kicking off in Quebec, where six months of protests against an 82 per cent rise in student fees are reaching a crescendo. Hundreds of thousands marched in Montreal in May, with protesters burning cars and launching Molotovs and police retaliating with rubber bullets. Unlike the response to the UK student protests of recent years, however, musicians countrywide have been ready to show support – most notably Win and Régine of Arcade Fire, who met, married and formed their band at Montreal's Concordia University. On a recent *Saturday Night Live* performance, the band sported emblematic red spots to support students "squarely in the red".

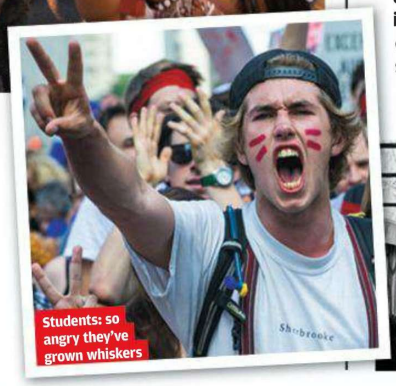
Canadian protests continued through Quebec's festival season to become the largest in the province's history, perhaps the country's. Meanwhile, Bill 78 – emergency legislation that makes wearing masks, encouraging protest, or sometimes even just turning up to a demo, punishable by a fine and criminal record – remains a point of fiery contention.

Now, with artists like Grimes, Tegan And Sara and, appropriately, Broken Social Scene backing the students, one thing's clear: the Canadian culturati have bigger balls than their Brit counterparts.

Dirty Beaches' Alex Zhang Hungtai says: "Canadian politics is taking a dark turn. The government are cutting the arts and funding support. They're even trying to privatise healthcare. It's turning into a Bush nightmare all over again."

Purity Ring's Corin Roddick agrees: "It's a lot more difficult to be creative when you're building up a giant student debt. Musicians are doing everything they can to make those issues known."

Let's not quibble over the missing 'up'


Students: so angry they've grown whiskers

WE ♥ CANADA

FROM THE HARD-ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Liam Cormier of Cancer Bats on the best heavy Canadian sounds

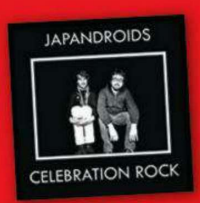
"There's a Toronto band called **Metz** that everyone's going crazy about. They're the band to open up the show and blow away the headliner. Also **Burning Love**, which is Chris Colohan from Cursed's new band. They're a force to be reckoned with! Their record on Southern Lord is gonna be the best thing ever. There's also **Exalt**, playing power-violence kind of stuff, which is really refreshing – to have kids in there. And **Single Mothers**, kind of drunken screamo. Like if you mixed the whole city with [Massachusetts screamo pioneers] Orchid. Jeremy from Touche Amore is putting that out.

Out on the West Coast stoner/metal scene, **Baptists** on Southern Lord is one of those West Coast bands that you wish would be able to tour, but they're professional skateboarders. In Toronto, the indie rock, stoner, hardcore and punk rock scenes have always blurred together. But now there's this one venue, The Shop, which is down in Parkdale – our newly gentrified artist area of town – where everybody's converging, hanging out and doing cool shows together."

Metz: a bit two-dimensional

Exalt

The five **best Canadian albums** of 2012 so far

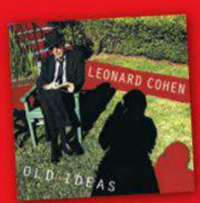


Japandroids – 'Celebration Rock'
Hailstorm melodies, windswept guitars and riotous gusto all add up to another critical sucker-punch for the Vancouver faves. With enormous choruses, the duo pummel the joy of misspent youth into every lung-swelling moment.

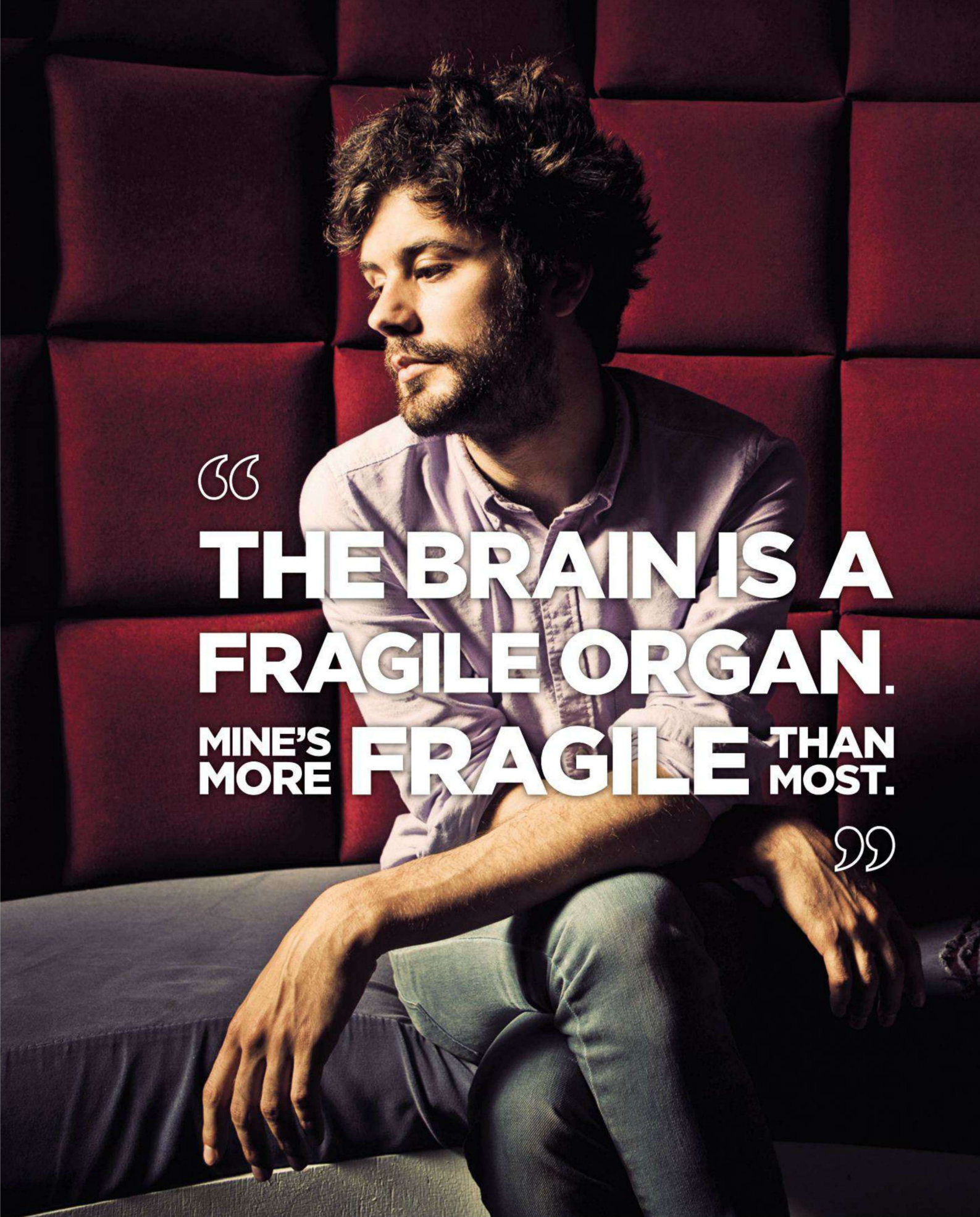
Grimes – 'Visions'
Raised on the lusty cocktail of pop and hipster nous, Claire Boucher's third LP trademarks a brand of ethereal, syrup-sweet nostalgia, vocals swept up and swallowed by drifting synths. Here's a record destined for end-of-year lists in all the right places.

Cancer Bats – 'Dead Set On Living'
Built on the larynx-mauling scream of fireball-of-crazy Liam Cormier, the Toronto hardcore punks have been round the block enough times to know they've settled on a good place. Heavier than a chainsaw killing spree.

Metric – 'Synthetica'
The indie-rock stalwarts conjured blurred visions of artifice versus reality for their fifth album. Then there's the vast production, sky-piercing melodies and glorious stadium choruses. Close your eyes, tip back your head and savour the sonic showdown.



Leonard Cohen – 'Old Ideas'
Back with the same old brilliant vision, and a suitably knowing title. Same old croak, humble and aged as withering twigs, yet with a completely compelling pull. The man's a hero – and he's made one of his best albums as he pushes 80.


“THE BRAIN IS A FRAGILE ORGAN. MINE’S MORE FRAGILE THAN MOST.”

Passion Pit are back with the sunniest album of 2012. But mainman Michael Angelakos suffered a breakdown to make it. Alex Denney steps into his shadows

PHOTO: PIETER M VAN HATTEN

The sun beats a blistering 97 degrees Fahrenheit out on the streets of Providence, Rhode Island, but conversation with Michael Angelakos has taken a turn for the frosty. "Sure you're prying!" he notes dryly, looking daggers at *NME*. You'll pardon our nosiness, because Michael's second album as Passion Pit arrives this month – one nervous breakdown, one battle with the booze and two marriage proposals after the first.

This morning, we made the four-hour trek from Manhattan to the Ocean State's capital — home of *Family Guy* and *The Onion* website — past miles of lush green countryside and signposts for places as strangely unexotic-sounding as Norwich, New London and Plymouth. Angelakos and crew have come to Providence to work on an eye-popping stage show they're unveiling tomorrow, just up the road (in American terms) in their resident Massachusetts.

"I WAS FLYING OFF THE HANDLEBARS"
Michael Angelakos

The scene is set for a triumphant return. But to get to the bottom of Passion Pit album number two, 'Gossamer', we need to go back to March 2009, and the band's SXSW showcase in Austin, Texas. The gig was intended as a milestone moment in Passion Pit's fledgling career, a rubber-stamping of their status as a band on the up. Instead, Michael suffered a nervous breakdown after coming offstage.

"Think about it," says Michael, arranging his preppy good looks into an expression of disdain. "I mean, [the attention] was just out of nowhere. Everyone was all of a sudden interested in what I was doing, and I was like, 'Well, that's a little strange.' Some people wait all their lives for this to happen, it's all they want to do. And some people make music and it just happens. I'm the latter. I didn't go out hunting for this kind of success. I'm very grateful for it, but I've never considered myself that kind of person."

Michael had inked a deal with Columbia/Frenchkiss in 2008, after a handful of tracks he penned as a Valentine's gift for his fiancée wound up forming the basis for the 'Chunk Of Change' EP. By the time of his breakdown, Passion Pit had morphed into a fully functioning live band that was less than two months away from dropping a debut full-length, 'Manners', combining the exuberance of MGMT, the wide-eyed complexity of Animal Collective and the paint'n'scissors pop of Friendly Fires. But scratch under the surface, and Passion Pit weren't as straightforwardly sunny as they seemed: "*I can feel the madness inch by inch*", Michael sang on 'The Reeling'. "*The more I run, the more I'm convinced*".

With his bandmates heading home from SXSW, Michael found himself suddenly unable to cope. He pleaded with a friend on the phone to take the next flight to Austin – but in his panic, wound up booking her a plane ticket for the wrong year. Eventually, his dad turned up, and they decided Michael should check in to a hospital in nearby Houston. He ended up staying there for a month, although Michael alludes to the fact that he has visited hospitals under similar circumstances more than once before. It was recently revealed that he has been bipolar since he was a teenager.

He doesn't like to talk about it. "'Cos from that moment on you're always 'Michael Angelakos, the so-and-so Passion Pit frontman,'" he says. "The only positive it could ever do is bring more attention to any kind of illness. But all it does is glorify it."

But how bad had things got? "The thing is, you know when you're a danger to yourself," he says, tugging gently at his beard. "The SXSW show was just something that tipped the bucket. I was flying off the handlebars; at a certain point I couldn't take it any more. I wasn't dealing with what was happening, the band was just drinking and having fun, and that doesn't bode well with my body or my brain – especially my brain. Everyone's brain is a ticking bomb; it can go off at any point. It's a very fragile organ... and mine's a little more fragile than other people's, I guess."

A glutton for punishment, Michael threw himself into a mammoth two-year touring schedule after his stay in hospital, a time made bearable by imposing strict daily routines. A few weeks' respite followed, before he started work on the new record.

"In my head I always knew how I wanted it to feel," says Michael of 'Gossamer'. "I guess you can liken [my music] to the onset of a drug, where it's like 'too much, too much' and you're kind of hallucinating by the end. I love teetering on the edge of insanity. But with this record it's so much more dynamic. 'Manners' was constantly on the edge, whereas the pacing on this record is not unlike that of an opera; it has acts and movements."

Writing and recording began during small-hours sessions in a Brooklyn studio with engineer Alex Aldi. 'Manners' producer Chris Zane was drafted in after an unproductive spell out in LA left Michael facing a crisis of direction. Of the early tracks to emerge from the New York sessions, 'On My Way' and 'Love Is Greed' offered clues as to the intensely personal direction his music was taking. The former is a marriage proposal to his girlfriend, and is bathed in glorious, 'Pet Sounds'-esque pomp.

The latter song, says Michael, was "written right after I proposed. But I did re-propose to my fiancée recently, because [making] this record totally negated the romance... I felt terrible about it. The timing was off, I completely screwed the whole thing up."

Indeed, it seems that Michael's relationship with his fiancée was the glue that held him together throughout this period, from 'I'll Be Alright''s needy assertion that "*I won't let you go/Unless I'll be alright*", to 'Constant Conversations' – an admission of domestic strife, jarringly crooned over a beautiful slice of R Kelly-ish soul: "*Well, you're standing in the kitchen/And you're pouring out my drink*".

"That's a song about alcohol-induced paranoia," chuckles Michael, pleased at having coated his bitter lyrical pill in a sugary slow-jam shell. "And how that affects people around you, just watching these crumbling relationships." 'Mirrored Sea' and the brilliant, Rustie/Hudson Mohawke-inspired 'I'll Be Alright' are also awash with booze, but Michael says it's a crutch he's learned to do without: "I not only preserved my body, but also my relationship [by giving up]. I would strongly advise people to not drink. I mean it's impossible, but I just wish it didn't exist. It's a terrible drug."

For all the loneliness at the heart of 'Gossamer', you could block out the lyrics and enjoy it for the belting summer record it is... sort of. But you'd be missing out on one of the most thrillingly frank pop records in recent memory. It's tempting to call it perverse.

"I don't think it's perverse!" Michael protests. "What better way of dealing with pain that by finding a joyful way of expressing it?"

And off he pops, wincing painfully into the bright midday sun.

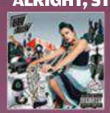
DARK SIDE OF THE SUN

More sun-pop albums with a bleak outlook

THE BEACH BOYS
'PET SOUNDS' *1966*

In which Brian Wilson laid bare the melancholy that coloured the band's surf-pop hymns – from the grown-up love song 'God Only Knows' to the square-peg lament 'I Just Wasn't Made For These Times'.

LILY ALLEN
'ALRIGHT, STILL' *2006*



Lil's star-making turn will forever be remembered for the deceptively breezy 'Smile', which concealed a coal-black heart, and 'LDN''s poison ode to the Big Smoke and its cheery cast of granny-bashers and crack whores. Even Phil Mitchell would find these lyrics bleak.

THE DRUMS
'THE DRUMS' *2010*

Oh sure, they wanted to go surfing for a *while*. But peel away the sun-kissed melodies and handclaps from their still-brilliant debut, and mostly The Drums just sounded like they wanted to sit around in their pants all day, feeling slightly sorry for themselves.

REVIEWS

THE BIG OPINIONS ON THIS WEEK'S IMPORTANT RELEASES

Edited by Tom Howard

BIG EASY EXPRESS

OUT NOW ON ITUNES, OUT ON DVD JULY 24

Mumford & Sons' epic American railroad odyssey gets the movie treatment – and makes surprisingly moving viewing

FILM OF THE WEEK

After watching *Big Easy Express*, you can't help feeling that even if their forthcoming second album is a flop, or if someone encases their favourite waistcoats in concrete and chucks them in the Thames, Mumford & Sons would still be chipper, content with the knowledge that for a week or so in 2011, they lived out one of their biggest dreams.

Back in 2008, when *NME* interviewed the up-and-coming bluegrass-botherers for the *Radar* pages in the pokey kitchen-cum-dressing room of Kilburn's dearly departed Luminaire, they were quick to admit that their obsession with the twang of a freshly plucked banjo was down to a mutual love of the Coen Brothers' sepia-hued, Alan and John Lomax-indebted *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*. And while *Big Easy Express* might lack an appearance from George Clooney in a hairnet, it is nonetheless their very own Soggy Bottom Boys moment; a warm, old-fashioned dip into a cynicism-free, Instagram-rendered notion of the United States, soundtracked by unparalleled Americana and dustbowl folk.

Before you get the wrong idea though, *Big Easy Express* is much more than simply *Mumfords: The Movie*. Following last year's fittingly cinematic Railroad Revival Tour, it sees Marcus, Ben, Winston and Ted dressed like old-school snake-oil salesmen touring the American Southwest. Travelling on a string of antique train carriages, Mumfords are accompanied by fellow Depression-era throwbacks Old Crow Medicine Show and the enticingly madcap Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros, as well as over 140 of their closest time-warped chums. In fact, it's only the concert footage, in which rabid fans in baseball caps raise iPhones in the front rows, that makes it clear that the film was shot in 2011 and not 1931.

In old Hollywood black and white as well as glorious Technicolor, director Emmett Malloy delights in showing off not just the bands, but the train cars. Beautiful beasts called things like the Silver Lariat and Silver Quail glisten in the sunlight, rolling past oceans, orange groves and pines, taking their jamming, tipsy cargo from Oakland, California to New Orleans, Louisiana. "Everyone's just so happy to be on this tour – like, it's the tour of dreams," beams Mumfords' Winston Marshall from a domed observation carriage, while others wax quasi-spiritual about the trip's significance.

Mixing up live material from the trackside gigs with staged performances on and around the trains, alongside on-board japery – including a particularly jazzy jam session in the bar car which might as well be a Southern Comfort advert – the film is only just over an hour in length, but succeeds in taking the viewer on a journey just as epic as the one made by these California Zephyr trains.

The film's most touching musical moment comes not from Marcus et al, but Edward Sharpe And The Magnetic Zeros. A demi-cultish family in the same mould as The Polyphonic Spree or The Flaming Lips, they're led by Alex Ebert, who, like all religious sect leaders worth their Rolls-Royces and horizontal recruitment techniques, is charismatic, handsome and fond of wearing tunics that look like grubby bedsheets. Playing 'All Wash Out' behind a barbed wire fence in a sun-bleached field, Alex's bruised soul vocals drift potently under a big blue cloudless sky, Malloy's unmistakeable shorthand for 'vintage America, fuck yeah'.

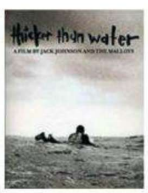
The multi-band finale of Woody Guthrie's 'This Train Is Bound For Glory' – which features some of the most rock'n'roll accordion playing you're ever likely to see – is enough to make you want to tie a knapsack and start riding boxcars. Although it's a little more difficult to live the American dream if you're based in, say, Hereford, rather than Houston.

At times it's almost too idyllic, but when the hippy lifestyle threatens to grate, the sincerity of the players shines through. It's also hard to be contemptuous in the face of quite so much grinning. When people are having this much fun, you can't help but be carried along for every inch of the 2,800-mile ride. ***Leonie Cooper*** **8**

NEED TO KNOW

Director Emmett Malloy

● Was the man behind the lens for The White Stripes' revelatory *Under Great White Northern Lights* Canadian tour movie



● Cut his teeth alongside MOR acoustica star Jack Johnson – who he used to manage – back in 2000 on surf movie *Thicker Than Water*

● Since then he's worked with his brother Brendan as The Malloys, directing vids for Metallica, Oasis, Weezer, Foo Fighters, The Shins, Ke$ha and Vampire Weekend

OM
ADVAITIC SONGS DRAG CITY

Now five studio albums deep, Om still operate from under the shadow of monolith-metal weed-prophets Sleep, from whose considerable ashes they emerged. Guitarist Matt Pike took their über-metal ethos and tabletop gaming imagery to High On Fire; bassist Al Cisneros and drummer Chris Hakius bagsied the shamanic trance atmospheres for Om. Hakius left in 2008, though, to be replaced by Emil Amos, and a lot of fans will tell you Om ain't been the same since. They're right, in the sense that only very rarely does 'Advaitic Songs' (five tracks, 43 minutes) unleash a nostalgically doomy riff. Still, while 'State Of Non-Return' stomps its black boots marvellously, the duo are equally given to Middle Eastern-sounding chants, mournful strings and spacerock intros – if Om were ever a metaller's band, they're not now. Brain-rinsingly psychedelic without needing to tell you about it, they deserve to sit at the table with Current 93 and post-Syd/pre-stadium Pink Floyd. ***Jordan Minnesota*** **7**

BEST TRACK: 'Gethsemane'

BARONESS
YELLOW AND GREEN RELAPSE

The first couple of releases from Baroness packed a fair old punch. 'Red Album' and 'Blue Record' were concoctions of crusty sludge-metal as baking as a summer in their home state of Georgia, but the band were orthodox hard rockers at their core, never all that extreme. Until 'Yellow And Green', their third album, that is: totalling 75 minutes and spread, slightly unnecessarily, over two CDs, it reaches unexpected new heights in the pantheon of 'metal bands who mellowed out'. Next to some of the quartet's excursions into dour indie-folk ('Twinkler') and their inexplicable lower-division Radiohead-isms ('Back Where I Belong'), equivalent career curveballs by Cave In, Mastodon and Metallica seem positively monstrous. Rather than write this off as a complete dud, though, be prepared to do your own editing. Baroness might not be jacks of all trades, but they are innately skilled riff writers and songcrafters. As such, 'Little Things' and 'Board Up The House' are among a handful of anthems-in-waiting. ***Noel Gardner*** **6**

BEST TRACK: 'Little Things'

JOHN MAUS
A COLLECTION OF RARITIES AND PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD MATERIAL DOMINO

Even in the well-stocked haberdashery that is popular music, John Maus is cut from pretty strange cloth. Sometime keyboardist for Animal Collective and Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti, Maus – by day, a philosophy professor from Minnesota – claims inspiration from Gregorian chant, critical theory, and classical composers Handel and Schoenberg. The charts, as you might expect, do not tremble at his approach. But this rag-tag collection, dating from between 1999 and 2010, sets out his stall as an outsider savant in an Ariel Pink vein, the likes of 'Castles In The Grave' and 'Mental Breakdown' spiriting something vivid out of blurry VHS-quality synths and Maus' sad, Ian Curtis-like tremor – although there is a moment midway through the naggingly silly 'This Is The Beat' when you find yourself wondering if this is what Keyboard Cat did next. ***Louis Pattison*** **6**

BEST TRACK: 'Castles In The Grave'

Faces To Names...
What the reviewers are doing this week

KEVIN EG PERRY
"Getting into the Wimbledon spirit by re-reading David Foster Wallace on Roger Federer, and living on a diet of strawberries and disappointment."

LEONIE COOPER
"I've just found out that there's a new Two Gallants album on the way, so I've been cheering the return of the 2000s' most underrated band."

LOUIS PATTISON
"I joined a gym, where I have been practising routines such as the knee-sprainer, the shoulder-dislocator and the return-to-work-as-a-sweaty-mess."

NAS
LIFE IS GOOD DEF JAM

The Queensbridge legend's very public split from Kelis hasn't stained this grimy, back-to-basics return to form

Never judge an album by its cover. Despite wearing a sad-eyed expression and having ex-wife Kelis' wedding dress draped over his knee, life is good for 38-year-old Nasir Jones right now, and any fears that the couple's drawn-out, lawyer-delighting divorce would lead to a self-indulgent 10th record evaporate the moment you hear his voice on opener 'No Introduction'. He's on ferocious form, ready to "*take over Goldman Sachs*", while at the same time acknowledging his status as a grand old man of rap: "*Don't applaud/I'm exhausted*".

Prior to the album's release, rumours abounded that big-hitters like Kanye or young bucks from Odd Future would be recruited to revamp Nas. But that isn't necessary. For the most part he sticks with tried-and-true allies Salaam Remi and No ID behind the desk, and they deliver an album as raw as anything since his 1994 classic 'Illmatic'. This is further proof that Nas is a master storyteller, blessed with a keen eye for detail. On the Rick Ross-featuring 'Accident Murderers' he sketches a victim in a couple of lines: "*Side of his mouth toothpick, one eyebrow raised*", while on 'World's An Addiction' he narrates an *American Psycho*-style tale in which billionaires turn to bestiality porn. Best of all is the relentless 'A Queens Story', which follows our narrator as he moves from the streets to being the "*only black man in a club with rich yuppies in*". By the time it's built to its powerful a cappella finale you'll be gasping for breath just from trying to keep up with his flow. There are a couple of club tunes thrown in (this is the Year of the Guetta after all), with bouncy Swizz Beatz collaboration 'Summer On Smash' being the most anthemic.

At this point, after proving he can rap and party as hard as anybody, Nas shifts down a gear. On 'Stay' he spits about his son Knight over a jazz trumpet, which recalls the music of his own father Olu Dara. But it's penultimate track 'Cherry Wine' that will stop you in your tracks. It's a 'duet' with Amy Winehouse, using vocals provided by their shared producer Remi, which feels like a response to her own Nas-inspired song 'Me And Mr Jones'. Closer 'Bye Baby' is much less sentimental, as Nas speaks bluntly to Kelis: "*The reason you don't trust men is your daddy's fault*". It's definitely airing dirty laundry, but you can't accuse him of not speaking his mind.

Musically, 'Life Is Good' feels familiar, a point he even references on 'Loco-Motive' when he raps: "*This is for my trapped-in-the-'90s niggas*". And you could level the criticism that this album doesn't exactly explore new ground sonically. But that would miss the point. Take solace in the fact that there's no ill-advised bandwagon-jumping here. Just Nas doing exactly what he does best. ***Kevin EG Perry*** **8**

BEST TRACKS: 'Cherry Wine', 'The Don', 'A Queens Story'

THE VERY BEST

MTMTMK MOSHI MOSHI

When Malawi and Sweden meet in Hackney and soak up Afropop and neon rave, you get a truly global sound

There are two ways us Westerners approach Africa. Musically speaking, that is, not as in 'by plane'. There's the art-rock method, with acts like Vampire Weekend using the continent as the idea equivalent of crude oil, scheduled for immediate import, applying African music's joyous trappings to New York. Then there are the exporters, acts like Blur who (for 'Think Tank') go out there, go native, smoke some frog-blood skunk-juice and do their best to sound authentically 'African'.

Somewhere in between you have hipster darlings The Very Best. But instead of all the to-ing and fro-ing between continents, all that producers Johan Hugo (Swedish) and Etienne Tron (French) – aka Radioclit – and Malawian singer Esau Mwamwaya had to do was meet in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Hackney, anchor down in the cultural spice-route of London and set up shop as a high-tech nexus for Afro-Western fusion. Add the internet and hipsterism's boner for combining African roots music with cutting-edge western production, and BINGO. Optimum conditions. The Very Best are born. Frog-blood skunk-juice optional.

And after the success of their critically acclaimed 2009 debut 'Warm Heart Of Africa', Mwamwaya and Hugo (but not the absent Tron) have serious pull for its follow-up, 'MTMTMK'. They've enlisted African heavyweights (star rapper K'naan and producer Mnek) and mega popsters (Bruno Mars and the Mumfords' Winston Marshall) to make it a world-music event album, and the large-scale end product is like an Afro-futurist, transcontinental world fair that thinks locally but parties globally. And in which autotuned Malawian singer Sonye warbles over reggaeton electro-tech ('Rudeboy'), while UK bass music turbocharges the South African mbaqanga sound of 'Mghetto'. "*We international/ From Malawi to Tokyo*" declares the Somalian Tinchy Stryder, K'naan. One world, baby.

Globalisation-pop gold abounds. 'Yoshua Alikuti' cuts between Balearic trance and African soul singing, while the coke-y 'Kondaine' is the Congo's famous kwassa kwassa dance rhythm meets wired Eurohouse. Elsewhere, 'Come Alive' incorporates Africa's most futuristic style, Angola's kuduro.

There's a slight hitch, though. Without Etienne Tron, Johan Hugo weights 'MTMTMK' towards 'dancier' electronica, whereas 'Warm Heart Of Africa' offered a more even balance between electronics and African trad. Apart from the hymnal, nature-worshipping 'Bantu' (featuring Amadou & Mariam) and the lightly strummed 'Nkango', 'MTMTMK' is all about neon-soaked city raving, and the result is a stiffer, uglier and over-Westernised sound, too reliant on soulless computerisation. It's like a beautiful savannah where every other oasis sports its own Starbucks. 'We OK' is synthy ringtone pop in the Rihanna vein, while bro-stepper 'Adani' isn't exactly your uplifting sunset-on-the-Serengeti-type stuff. When its gurny techno bit kicks in it's all 'fuck nature, let's dance'.

But, all things considered, it'll take more than a MacBook to dampen what's always defined Afropop: euphoria. ***John Calvert*** **7**

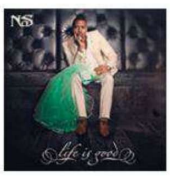
BEST TRACKS: 'Bantu', 'Rudeboy', 'Mghetto'

Key Notes

Best Sleeve Of The Week

Gatekeeper, 'Exo'

Gatekeeper's debut LP comes with its own "first-person gaming environment" and sounds like PlayStations screwing. Looks like it too.



Worst Sleeve Of The Week

Nas, 'Life Is Good'

Kelis has no problem with Nas picturing her wedding dress on the cover of his new album. We do. He should have gone the whole hog and worn it.

LAWRENCE ARABIA

THE SPARROW FIRE

The success of 'The Sparrow' hangs on a knife-edge – the humour could so easily drown the accomplishment, and the storytelling could so easily smother the sentiment. Thankfully, the balance is kept in check, and the result is a finely honed paean to the art of the songwriter. It's part Bacharach, part Barrett, instruments tripping lightly under Lawrence's silken vocals. Moments of lyrical stealth punctuate the suave and steady tones, never more so than on the comically chilling 'Early Kneecappings' and the steely melodrama of 'The Bisexual'. 'The Sparrow' is proof that a band can mature without losing their spark. ***Hayley Avron*** **7**

BEST TRACK: 'Travelling Shoes'

POST WAR YEARS

GLASS HOUSE EP CHESS CLUB

You could say the rampant genre-hopping of Londoners Post War Years makes them unclassifiable. Or you could say they clearly haven't got a ruddy clue which direction to go in. Following up their 2009 debut album 'The Greats and The Happenings' with this EP, they swing from 'Gloss Drop'-smothered click-clacking ('Glass House') to Arcade Fire-via-Foals army march ('Brazil') to LCD Soundsystem synth-dance ('Galapagos') to the chopped-up, Breton-like shudder-rock of 'Mirror (Roam)': four handbrake turns that hardly make this the most cohesive of records. The thing is, they do all of them really well. So yeah, unclassifiable. But successful. ***Jamie Fullerton*** **6**

BEST TRACK: 'Brazil'

ECHO LAKE

WILD PEACE NO PAIN IN POP

On June 21 this year, Echo Lake's drummer Pete Hayes died, aged 25. Within that context, it's difficult to listen to his band's debut album, 'Wild Peace', and decide whether it's good, bad or somewhere in between. What the south London quintet have made is an album full of delicious dream-pop. It's calm, quiet and peaceful. It eases your mind. It soothes your soul. It makes you feel happier than you were before you started listening to it. It's music that would work on the beach. That would work on a train. That would work walking alone, in the rain, with your hood up, on the way to get a jerk chicken takeaway. Anywhere, really. I hope Pete was proud. ***Tom Howard*** **8**

BEST TRACK: 'Wild Peace'

ERIN K & TASH

OUR FIRST EP ERIN K & TASH RECORDINGS

Straight outta Soho come Landahn's answer to *Flight Of The Conchords* – they're a bit Kimya Dawson and a bit Adam & Joe's Kate Nash parody 'Bums And Binge Drinking'. It isn't the most ground-breaking of musical escapades – the black comedy of 'Heart Out' ("*Rip out my heart/ Replace it with quavers/Declare it as art*") is strikingly similar to the lyrical wryness of Emmy The Great, and 'This Boy' is a direct descendant of Miss Nash's plaintive 'We Get On' – but if you're craving a fresh duo of filthy-mouthed indie darlings clad in Topshop print dresses and giggling about small penises, then you can't go far wrong with this wilfully whimsical EP. ***Katherine Rodgers*** **6**

BEST TRACK: 'Heart Out', 'Oh Well'

NIALL KENNY

COOLY G

PLAYIN' ME HYPERDUB

The restless Brixton DJ's debut swirls and bleeps like something from the future but lives firmly in 2012

Cooly G is a producer, a DJ, a vocalist, the founder and head of the Dub Organizer label, a former music technology tutor, an ex-semi-pro footballer and a mum. Basically, every time you ever think to yourself, "I should really do more", it's because people like Cooly G exist.

Now the south Londoner has found time to release an album on Hyperdub, the seminal dubstep label that's run by Kode9 and is home to Burial – and 'Playin' Me' develops the UK funky sound she's been pushing for years, with its devastating sub-bass, raindrop drums and warm vocals.

Within those vocals is a pop edge, and some of her lyrics could be cut straight from the Top 40: *"I would like to get to know you/I could have your number and give you a call"* she sings on 'Good Times'. *"You give me sunshine/Come sex me, come undress me"*, she breathes on 'Sunshine'. Both come with trickling, minimal beats and the deepest of drops. Other points see Cooly use her voice as an instrument, as on the synth stab that decorates the album's title track. And there are moments with no vocals at all, like the killer drum breakdown on 'It's Serious' that's by far the funkiest moment on the record. But the best thing about 'Playin' Me' is that for all its futuristic swirl, it's a record about living in London in 2012. About late buses home, about crushing on new guys you spot in a foggy club, about going *"down the street"* with your mates to get a bite to eat.

The only weak moment – and it's a clanger – is a cover of Coldplay's 'Trouble', which disrupts the album's flow. But as an overall body of work it's a homage to real life, and to seduction. As 'Landscapes' goes, it's an album to make you *"feel, feel, feel"*. ***Siân Rowe***

8

BEST TRACKS: 'Landscapes', 'Good Times', 'Sunshine'

CYPRESS HILL MEETS RUSKO

CYPRESS X RUSKO V2

It takes precisely six seconds for this unlikely meeting of minds (Cypress Hill are Los Angeles rap veterans of 20-plus years' standing; Rusko is a dubstep producer from Leeds) to produce a mention of "high grade", and the listener instinctively fears stoned nonsense. But this five-track mini is actually rather jolly – B Real was always an excellent MC if he wasn't stoned, and he audibly takes to Rusko's Chase & Status-esque bombastic numbskull electro, most notably on the tongue-twisty old skool of 'Medicated'. *"Been in the game too long"*, they note on the gun-happy 'Shots Go Off' – well, maybe, just maybe, that's not true yet. ***Pete Cashmore***

6

BEST TRACK: 'Medicated'

GATEKEEPER

EXO HIPPOS IN TANKS

Gatekeeper's Aaron David Ross and Matthew Arkel crunch elements of '80s post-industrial dance, horror/sci-fi soundtracks and computer game music into an enjoyably garish whole. This smash'n'grab approach yields some curious echoes: their electro-horror aesthetic is hugely reminiscent of Mark Shreeve, while the metallic percussion of 'Tree Drum' recalls Brad Fiedel's *Terminator* soundtracks and 'Dromos' sounds a lot like The Prodigy circa 'Music For The Jilted Generation'. 'Visitor' and 'Re-gen' alternate between VHS-ident trashiness and widescreen sci-fi grandeur and, just to add to the retro-futurist disorientation, the album comes complete with its own computer game. ***Joseph Stannard***

7

BEST TRACK: 'Dromos'

The Rider

What we're reading, wearing and snapping on this week

Book

The Rolling Stones: 50

Mick, Keith, Ronnie and the other one write and curate the best of their archives. Cool. Will they retire now?

Buy it: £29.95, thamesandhudson.com

T-shirt

Ranks Sun Ra T

T-shirt designers Ranks have a new line of band tees. DJ Screw, Steely Dan and Sun Ra get 'styled'.

Buy it: £25, rankslondon.com

Camera

Polaroid Instant Digital Camera

Is it a Polaroid? Is it a digital? Well, kinda both. Based on a 1980s model, this prints photos and records HD video.

Buy it: £100, polaroid.com

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's **TOM HOWARD**

JODIE CONNOR FEAT BUSTA RHYMES

TAKE YOU THERE 3BEAT

Two things you'll notice when watching the video for 'Take You There': 1) Jodie Connor, formerly of Roll Deep fame, has ditched the grime-pop in favour of dancing about on a beach in skimpy chain-mail to routine synthpop. Alarming, but not as alarming as: 2) Busta Rhymes was *not* invited to join her on said beach. Who doesn't invite Busta Rhymes on holiday?

AZARI & III

INTO THE NIGHT ISLAND

If there's a teeny chance you're yet to familiarise yourself with tremendous house music monsters Azari & III – JUST DO IT. They're the greatest guaranteed good-time band of our time, and even though this and every other song on their debut album has been released about 12 times already, it's still loads more fun than your plans for this weekend.

ALT-J

TESSELLATE INFECTIOUS

In which the ultimate Devendra Banhart soundalikes roll on with 'Tessellate', the most Devendra Banhart of all Alt-J songs. Doesn't matter though, 'cos its piano lollop is as pleasingly creepy as all their other stuff, helped by the superbly delivered line, *"And all your friends come..."* (breathes in deeply and heavily through nose) *...sniffing"*.

KING CHARLES FEAT MUMFORD & SONS

THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT UNIVERSAL

King Charles is one of those genuine English eccentrics who wears tracksuit bottoms at the same time as sporting a wispy Dali moustache like it's no big deal. He's roped in chums Mumford & Sons to help him become more famous than he'd otherwise ever be with their banjos, waistcoats and hog-roast podge. It's fine, 'cos King Charles has a beehive hairdo.

BLOOD DIAMONDS FEAT GRIMES

PHONE SEX 4AD

"Listened to this track – my brain turned into honey and is slowly dripping from my nostrils, ears and mouth." That YouTube comment has 11 thumbs-ups. And montreal514kino's right, you know. The bass/steel-drum combo is the musical equivalent of using olive oil to loosen excess earwax, with added Grimes vox: *"Hey daddy it's too soon/I'm living on the moon"*.

DELILAH

INSIDE MY LOVE ATLANTIC

Do you recognise this as: a) Jean Jacques Smoothie's house banger '2 People'; b) Moloko's remix of said house banger; c) Minnie Riperton's 1975 tune 'Inside My Love' or d) Paloma Stoecker aka Delilah's fourth single? If you answered a) Your knowledge of house music is strong; b) Your knowledge of Radio 1 in 2001 is strong; c) You're probably too old to be reading this mag; d) That's exactly what it is. Quite good isn't it?

LIVE

FROM PUBS TO ARENAS, THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

Edited by Tom Howard

REGINA SPEKTOR

ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON MONDAY, JULY 2

The cult singer/songwriter may come across as a bit cute, but her now hugely impressive arsenal of songs packs a satisfying emotional punch

There's a pleasing irony to tonight's proceedings. Regina Spektor is playing her first UK show to promote an album called 'What We Saw From The Cheap Seats' at the notoriously vertiginous Royal Albert Hall, and you can't help but feel that a certain amount of squinting is probably required from the people watching the show from seats 135 feet above the stage. Especially when the anti-folk icon hides her sparkly stage frock behind her beloved baby grand piano.

Hearing her is less of a strain. Live, the Russian-born New Yorker sounds much the same as she does on record: sweet, swooping and plucky, like a baby sparrow exiting the nest. The one surprise is that her voice is mightier than expected. Much mightier. And on hearing the long, quivering note she hits during 'Sailor Song', it's tempting to speculate on her rider's secret ingredient: ginger tea? Acacia honey? An Axl Rose-endorsed oxygen canister? Whatever it is, it works, and she sings faultlessly for almost two hours.

But Regina being Regina, she doesn't shirk the quirks. There's white-chick beatboxing on 'All The Rowboats'. 'Oh Marcello' features her best impression of an Italian accent, which sounds like an audition for *Nancy Dell'Olio: The Musical*. She even simulates the tooting of trumpets at the end of 'The Party'.

> ***Her stage patter and vocal tics don't detract from the music's emotional richness***

Think that sounds cutesy? Check out her excuse for fluffing the first verse of 'Samson': "I'm sorry, there was just so much love in the room..."

Her stage patter and vocal tics don't distract from the music's emotional richness though. A dramatic ballad called 'Open' is like a gothic novel in song, while the string-swathed 'How' sounds like 'Unchained Melody' left marinating in salty tears. 'Laughing With', a firm fan favourite from her 2009 album 'Far', is still startling enough to bring a packed concert hall to hushed silence.

Of course, she has quite the back catalogue to pick from these days. Tonight's setlist mixes highlights from her new album with Spektor classics stretching all the way back to 2002's 'Samson'. In so doing, it highlights just how many terrific pop tunes she's recorded: 'Better', 'Fidelity', 'Dance Anthem Of The '80s', 'Don't Leave Me (Ne Me Quitte Pas)'. A song like 'Eet' is so charmingly hummable, you'll have heard it in the queue at Pret A Manger. But it's also got enough personality that when Spektor sings it tonight, it doesn't remind you of your last tuna bloomer. The result is a pleasingly meaty show from a performer who's more robust than she looks. Cheap seats or not, no one will have left feeling short-changed. ***Nick Levine***

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

VICTORIA, 24, DUBLIN
"I'm obsessed. I flew over from Dublin just to see her tonight and it was totally worth it!"

DANIELLE, 28, LONDON
"Regina turned the Royal Albert Hall into a kind of hysterical group hug."

DANIEL, 21, LONDON
"I loved the whole thing, but 'Samson' and 'Better' were my highlights. She's just so cool!"

ADAM, 24, SANDWICH
"I was really hoping she'd play 'Hotel Song', and then she slipped it in right at the end! I'm in awe"

EMILIE BAILEY

DISCLOSURE

DALSTON ROOF PARK, LONDON FRIDAY, JUNE 29

The Lawrence brothers bring the garage – and Jessie Ware – to a windy rooftop in east London

A brisk northeasterly wind whips across Dalston's Roof Park, the tell-it-like-it-is location for the launch of Disclosure's 'The Face' EP. It's hardly ideal conditions for rooftop raving, but somehow it fits the Lawrence brothers' distinctly British-complexioned dance music (you think Guy grabbed his Nice 'N' Ripe T-shirt out of the laundry by chance?). Wind-chill aside, 'Boiling' helps relax goosebumpy limbs into the smoove grooves with its oily chords and cologne-drenched libidinousness. Working together intuitively from behind their technology-laden trestle table, Howard and Guy strap on bass guitars, pester a cowbell and muster as much charisma as is humanly possible while fingering an MPC. The rich, bauble-like keys and cheap champagne fizz of 'Flow' find curious rhyme in the actions of the venue's chef, who is handing out Maraschino cherries on sticks. 'Control''s ricocheting handclaps and insinuating synths act as a reminder of how strange pop music can be when filtered through garage's obtuse angles. And inevitably, the highlight comes when Jessie Ware is introduced onstage for their remix of 'Running'. Greeted like a newly minted classic, the crowd of friends and family members dance-walk themselves into a frenzy in the crisp moonlight. A relaxed, celebratory mood then, and a joyful culmination of a successful opening run. Now boys, where next? ***Louise Brailey***

LAURA PALMER, DEREK BRENMER

REAL ESTATE

ELECTRIC BALLROOM, LONDON
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

You can intellectualise bands like Real Estate all you like – and the crowd tonight could double up as a congregation at the altar of Pitchfork – but the best music is about feeling, not thinking. "I was in terrible pain earlier, but as soon as I walked onstage it went away," smiles guitarist Matt Mondanile. True, their shimmering fretwork and lilting charms are masterfully put together, but it's that feeling that everything will be alright that really resonates. From the gut-wrenching guitar lines of 'Municipality' to the subtle bounce of 'Easy', Real Estate don't flaunt their technical nous, but use it as a means to an emotional end. ***Sarah Pope***

ZEBRA KATZ

YOYO, LONDON
THURSDAY, JUNE 28

When Zebra Katz's 'Ima Read' soundtracked avant-garde fashion designer Rick Owens' catwalk show in March, no-one was talking about the clothes. The rapper's pitch-black ode to NYC queer ballroom culture went viral, and tonight is the rapper's first time in London. His short set is compulsive, thanks to a blend of Minaj eye-bulging and onstage mock-shocks. 'Ima Read' is bolstered by an ecstatically received prologue and encore, and the crowd chants "*Ima slice that bitch/ Ima dice that bitch*" as Zebra vogues through the crowd. "London, you got read twice," he smiles. Incredible. ***Owen Myers***

KATE NASH

CLWB IFOR BACH, CARDIFF SATURDAY, JUNE 30

Back and not afraid to screech it – underestimate the popper-turned-punker at your peril

When Kate Nash emerged from pop hibernation this June with the video for 'Under-estimate The Girl', it's fair to say reaction was er, somewhat mixed. No one should have been that surprised, mind you. The perky Brit-winner whose nice frocks and songs about oral hygiene, pongy feet and crap boyfriends saw the British record-buying public take Kate and her debut album 'Made Of Bricks' to their hearts was already long gone. The riot-grrl-meets-retro-pop revamp she'd undergone by the time of 2010's 'My Best Friend Is You' (also not received too well in some parts) saw to that. Far from revert to plinky piano-pop safety, though, the moody video for 'Under-estimate...' saw a badger-haired, dead-eye-stared Nash push into brattier, punkier, squall-and-screechier territory than ever. With those screeches in mind, it's not so much expectation in the air tonight, as a feeling that this could go either way.

When the 24-year-old takes the stage, it quickly becomes clear that her ever-ragier reinventions haven't diminished the wit, empathy and kookiness that made her so many friends in the first place. The spiky surf-pop stylings of 'Conventional Girl' remain lodged in the brain, while 'Oh My God' channels Pixies to fine effect. Of the largely new material she's showcasing, 'Under-estimate The Girl' is by some distance the weakest. What's more, Nash appears to be having the time of her life. Backed by an all-girl band who look like they're having as much fun as their leader, her zeal wins over the significant section of the crowd who are here for the hits.

Speaking of which, she still finds time for a trio of oldies, and the evergreen 'Foundations', 'Doo-Wah-Doo' and 'Kiss That Grrl' are all wheeled out, refreshed and raw with buzzsaw guitars. In the latter case, when Kate sings that she'll think of "*1,000 ways to hurt you*", the threat sounds far from idle. But it's not all noise and punk energy. 'You're So Cool, I'm So Freaky' is an almost uncomfortably confessional moment, and by the time the touching and unaccompanied 'Lullaby For An Insomniac' draws to a close, many an expectation has been confounded. What do you know – turns out one or two of us might have underestimated the girl after all. ***Kristian Dando***

Brett's hand-to-mouth microphone co-ordination needs some work

SUEDE

HOP FARM FESTIVAL, KENT SUNDAY, JULY 1

A re-energised and adored band with a headline slot and a brace of promising new tunes prove there's life in the Brit-fop show dogs yet

After the seemingly endless charge of reuniting '90s heroes, it feels like we've finally reached phase two of the operation. Blur have unveiled their first new tracks (bar Record Store Day release 'Fool's Day') in nine years, while The Stone Roses have a few festival dates before they return to the studio. Tonight, Britpop dandies Suede join the reinvigorated ranks.

Heading up the final night of Hop Farm, this may be their second festival season back in the game, but with a glimpse into forthcoming album six on the cards, it feels less like an exercise in nostalgia, more like a band with one hell of a lot of hits to get through. Dishing out a hefty portion of the big guns ('We Are The Pigs', 'Trash', 'Animal Nitrate') early on, Brett Anderson and his uniformly black-clad troupe succeed in getting the relatively tame (this is Hop Farm, after all) crowd on side from the off, while ensuring the set is more than just a prolonged wait for the singalongs. A sweeping 'Stay Together' receives a rare outing, while the sleazy stomp of B-side 'Killing Of A Flashboy' finds Anderson, if not in quite as arse-slapping, raunchy form as his heyday, then three shades more flamboyant than most men his age.

> ***Brett Anderson is three shades more flamboyant than most men his age***

Between this we get two glimpses into where the band are headed, both of which are more promising than where they previously ended up. 'Sabotage', all atmospherically doomy guitar parts and nasal cries of "*the climate of our greed*", is a slow-burner but a satisfying one, while 'For The Strangers' – receiving its first ever live outing – makes for a grand successor to 'Saturday Night'. Both fall on the more sedate end of the band's spectrum, but hint there's still a viable way for the group to retain their innate sense of drama.

And, as Anderson makes his way along the crowd barrier during a final, epic 'Still Life', the frantic mob that flail out to reach him prove there's enough love for Suede to make their renewed activity exciting news. ***Lisa Wright***

BRETT ON THE NEW SONGS...

SABOTAGE
"'Sabotage' isn't a real rocker but it's not that mellow either – it's mid-tempo. It's quite '80s indie in its darkness, akin to The Cure or Joy Division and that kind of stuff, quite slow and very atmospheric. It's maybe the one on the new album that stands out on its own."

FOR THE STRANGERS
"It's a swaying, languid thing that rocks, too. If it's referencing any previous Suede material, it's the first three records. We've worked with Ed Buller, who produced those records. The world wanted us to work with a hip, new producer, but it was always going to be him."

RETNA

M83

MANDELA HALL, BELFAST TUESDAY, JUNE 26

Try as dreamy prog voyager Anthony Gonzalez might to set the dials to Pink Floyd, his knack for delirious pop keeps pulling him back to earth – and 'Midnight City' – with a bang

It's amazing what a perfect pop song can do for a man. Anthony Gonzalez has always erred towards the grandiose, but as he's learned to distil it, his crowds have grown. As great as old tunes like 'Kim & Jessie' and 'Don't Save Us From The Flames' (both absent tonight) are, there's nothing in M83's arsenal like the mainstream-pricking, montage-soundtracking, all-encompassing majesty of 'Midnight City'. The response, when it drops after nearly an hour, is a mix of relief and utter euphoria from the many people who are only here for one song. But what a song.

Rewind an hour, and the gig opens with the stately synth epic 'Intro', with 'Teen Angst' and 'Reunion' steaming in behind in a hail of thunderous drumming and rainbow-hued synths. Then Gonzalez and co switch gear. 'Reunion' slyly morphs into pounding electro, then straight into the cowbell-spattered thrills of 'Sitting'. But it's Tuesday night, so no-one's dancing yet. End of act one.

M83 could put on a full Underworld-style arena-rave show if they felt like it, but that's not Gonzalez's style. His albums whiff of pretension – please see the 22-track prog-pop odyssey that is 'Hurry Up, We're Dreaming' for proof – but there's very little self-indulgence live. He's obsessed with varying moods and textures, and just as the gig is warming up, the oddly countryish guitar tones of 'Year One, One UFO' cut through the cosmic atmosphere and knock us off course. For the most part, though, the shape-shifting is a success. 'Wait' and 'Skin Of The Night' are spooky and ethereal like prime Cocteau Twins, 'This Bright Flash' blasts us against the back wall with an onslaught of overdriven guitars and, on 'A Guitar And A Heart', they set the dials to Pink Floyd.

For all the sense that you're listening to Big Important Music, however, Anthony Gonzalez is a pop kid at heart. Take the huge "*It's coming on!*" coda of 'We Own The Sky' as an example, or the ecstatic pop thrills of 'Steve McQueen'. And definitely take 'Midnight City'. We all know it's coming, but it's still an absurd head-rush when the sax player bounds on just in time for the solo. Imagine the recorded version, multiply it to the power of Springsteen at Glastonbury and you're still not picturing the pure delirium in the room. And still there is time for a joyous trance (yup) take on 'Couleurs' that flies in the face of taste and decency.

But since when was being tasteful fun anyway? No navel-gazing here, just massive pop tunes. ***Chris Jones***

VIEW FROM THE CROWD

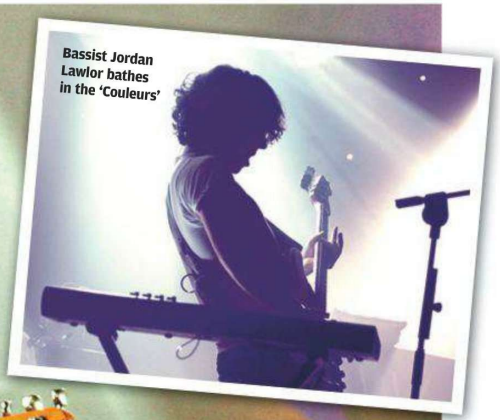
Fearghal, 19, Dungannon
"Badass. 'Couleurs' at the end was sweet. I watched them on YouTube from Coachella and it lived up to that."

Matt, 26, Belfast
"They've got a real energy onstage these days. I don't know what it is, but they seem to bring it every time they play."

Cat, 26, Belfast
"Brilliant atmosphere, really good music, lights... The saxophonist was epic. And yer man with the hair is a total babe."

ALAN MCCLURE

Anthony Gonzalez: "Alright, alright! I'll do 'Midnight City' next!"



Bassist Jordan Lawlor bathes in the 'Couleurs'

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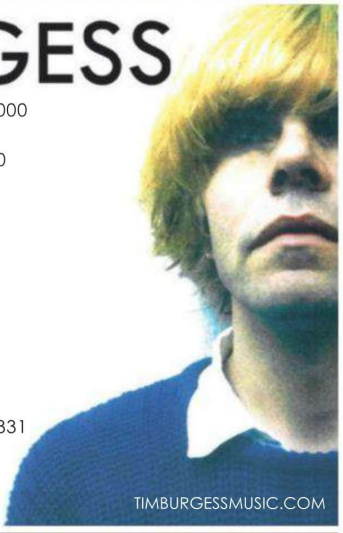

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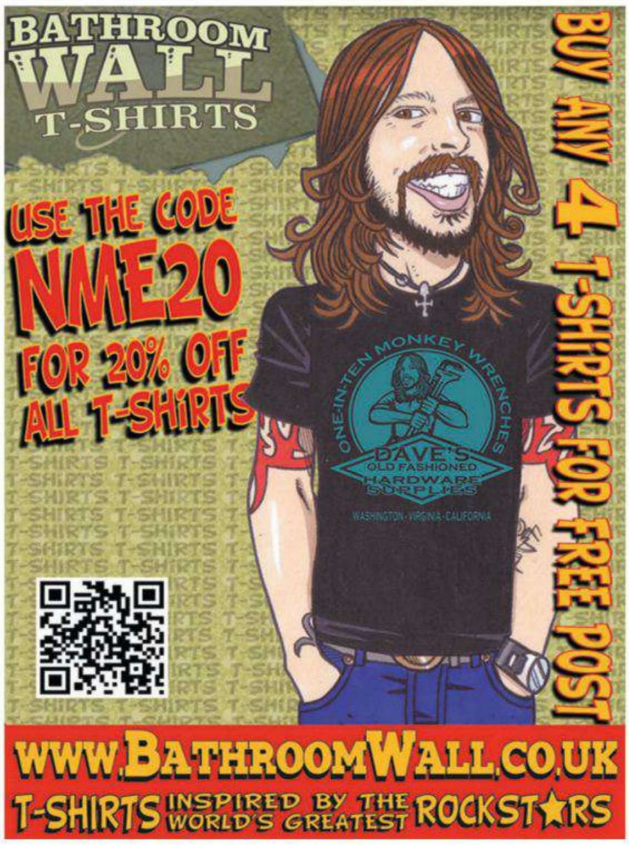

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ALABAMA SHAKES

STARTS: Oxford O2 Academy 2, Sep 4

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This time last year, American quartet Alabama Shakes hadn't even released their first four-song EP 'Alabama Shakes', but now look at them. They've had a top three UK album, and impressed more fawning TV hosts than is probably healthy. Their US tour supporting Brittany's dream jam-partner Jack White was sold out. But they're not finished with debut album 'Boys & Girls' quite yet. Come November they'll return to the UK to cause more roots-inspired havoc, playing two September dates at Oxford O2 Academy 2 (Sep 4) and Brighton's Concorde (Sep 5) before travelling back over the sea in November for four more: Manchester Academy (Nov 12), Glasgow Barrowlands (Nov 13), London Coronet (Nov 16) and Kentish Town's HMV Forum (Nov 17).

CONVERSE REPRESENT

STARTS: London 100 Club, Jul 30

Plan B, SBTRKT (pictured) and Nas are just three of the acts playing the shoe brand's next series of gigs at this legendary venue.

LA ROUTE DU ROCK

STARTS: Aug 10

The xx and Willis Earl Beal (pictured) have been added to the French festival line-up. Tickets from the UK come with cross-Channel ferry travel for just £149.

STRUMMER OF LOVE

STARTS: Secret location Somerset, Aug 17

Mick Jones and The Justice Tonight Band (pictured) headline a special event to mark the 10th anniversary of Joe Strummer's death.

ITUNES FESTIVAL

STARTS: London Roundhouse, Sep 1

Labrinth (pictured) joins the artists taking part in this year's iTunes festival. Jack White, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Usher and One Direction also play.

BESTIVAL

STARTS: Isle of Wight Robin Hill Country Park, Sep 6

Kate Nash (pictured), Disclosure and Rudimental have been added to the bill, which includes The xx and Florence + The Machine.

GALLOWS

STARTS: Brighton The Haunt, Oct 3

Frank Carter may be off making Pure Love but that won't stop Gallows. The band, heavier than ever, tour this October, kicking it all off in Brighton.

MICACHU AND THE SHAPES

STARTS: Brighton Coalition, Oct 13

Mica Levi and band follow the release of their second Rough Trade LP 'Never' with a UK tour. They end at Swn Festival in Cardiff on Oct 21.

HOT CHIP

STARTS: London O2 Academy Brixton, Oct 18

Hot Chip have added a second O2 Academy Brixton date to their October UK tour. It teasingly promises 'special guests' as support.

ALT-J

STARTS: Manchester RNCM, Oct 27

The 'Tessellate' band build on the success of their album 'An Awesome Wave' with a nine-date tour in October and November. First stop, Manchester.

JESSIE WARE

STARTS: Glasgow King Tut's, Nov 7

The up-and-coming vocalist heads off on her debut tour in support of LP 'Devotion' this autumn. Expect guest appearances from soul buddy Sampha.

BOBBY WOMACK

STARTS: London HMV Forum, Nov 25

Following a sold-out date at Heaven, the 68-year-old soul singer announces a new London date in support of recent album 'Bravest Man In The Universe'.

WILD BEASTS

STARTS: Camber Sands Holiday Park, Dec 7

Kendal's finest will play third album 'Smother' in its entirety at this year's ATP Nightmare Before Christmas, curated by The National.

ANDREW WHITTON, RICHARD JOHNSON, EMILIE BAILEY, DAN KENDALL, TIM COCHRANE

PICK *of the* WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help

TUNE-YARDS

STARTS: Glasgow Oran Mor, July 11

NME PICK

Madonna starts the next leg of her MDNA UK tour this week amid rumours that she's hired a "sterilisation team" to check that no enterprising fans manage to find traces of her DNA in venues after she's left. We'd expect nothing less from one of the world's biggest stars, but if you prefer things a bit more lo-fi (some would say "realistic"), you'll be pleased to know that the Madonna Of Indie, Tune-Yards, is also back in the UK to play a couple of shows and tear up Latitude festival in Suffolk. If you've seen Merrill Garbus and band before, you'll know that the hollering, stamping and drum-heavy R&B-, funk- and punk-inspired tracks from 2011's 'Whokill' and 2009's 'Bird-Brains' are best heard live and best experienced by leaving your inhibitions at the door. Dance like you're at, erm, a Madonna gig.

Everyone's Talking About SWEDISH HOUSE MAFIA

STARTS: Milton Keynes Bowl, July 14

Oh SHM, this was meant to be YOUR summer. Ibiza! Madrid! Milton Keynes! Huge crowds losing it to farty synths and masterful drops! Now you're quitting and all we're left with is the biggest electronic dance music event of the year. Support comes from Calvin Harris, Madeon and Example.

Don't Miss WU LEGENDS

STARTS: Glasgow O2 ABC, July 12

Some of the Wu-Tang Clan take time out from solo work, fashion lines, and playing chess – seriously, they love chess – to tour the UK. GZA, Raekwon, Method Man and Ghostface Killah play the ABC plus dates at HMV venues in London, Manchester and Birmingham. No word on what they'll be playing, but get ready to 'Protect Ya Neck' just in case.

Radar Stars NITE JEWEL

STARTS: Bristol Start The Bus, July 11

Ramona Gonzalez has been the poster woman for shadowy "liquid cool" (her words) electronic pop for a few years, but on her 2012 album 'One Second Of Love' she's made some tunes that work as well live as on your headphones on the night bus. She'll take in Liverpool (Jul 12), Glasgow (13), Leeds (14), Manchester (15), Birmingham (16) and Brighton (17) too.

WEDNESDAY

July 11

ABERDEEN
Crown Jewel Defense/Summerlin/ Final Chapter The Tunnels 01224 211121

BATH
Wicker Bones Chapel Arts Centre 01225 404445

BIRMINGHAM
Paul Heaton St Paul's Church
Sharon Van Etten Glee Club 0870 241 5093

BRIGHTON
Cahalen Morrison & Eli West Prince Albert 01273 730 499
Futures/Don Broco/Natives The Haunt 01273 770 847
Go Sailor/The Smittens/A Fine Day For Sailing Green Door Store 07894 267 053

BRISTOL
Johnny Velon/Pistols At Dawn/ Damn Vandals Fleece 0117 945 0996
Nite Jewel Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
Reventure/6Fears7 Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Vestiges/Downfall Of Gaia Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144

CARDIFF
Quiet Marauder/My Name Is Ian/ Francesca's Word Salad Gwdihw Cafe Bar 029 2039 7933

EDINBURGH
Michael Feerick/Now Wakes The Sea/Convex Mancave Banshee Labyrinth 0131 558 8209

GLASGOW
A Plastic Rose/Part Wind Part Wolf Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Rams' Pocket Radio King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Tune-Yards Oran Mor 0141 552 9224

GUILDFORD
Martin Shaw Farncombe Cavern 01483 416741

LANCASTER
Howler Library 01717 3942651

LEEDS
Afghan Hounds/Masks/Little Victories/Remember The Hurricanes Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Martin Stephenson Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Runaround Kids/Wot Gorilla? Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831

LEICESTER
Derrin Nauendorf Musician 0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL
Orca Team Mello Mello 0151 707 0898

LONDON
Arrows Of Love Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Betty Wright Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Black Tusk/Okkultokrati Underworld 020 7482 1932
Cold Chisel O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Dawes Scala 020 7833 2022
Electro Nude/The Irrepressibles/ Noblesse Oblige Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen 020 7613 0709
Hanni El Khatib Birthday's
Hit Factory Live: Kylie Minogue/ Bananarama/Dead Or Alive/2 Unlimited/Jason Donovan Hyde Park
Make Sparks/Coasts/Jude Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Monuments/No Consequence/ Stalked By Scarlet Barfly 0870 907 0999
Noise Complaint MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Now I See Bees I Won/Complete Radio Silence Monarch 0871 230 1094
Queen With Adam Lambert HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
The Temper Trap Somerset House 020 7344 4444
Yeasayer The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Yellowire The Wheelbarrow

MANCHESTER
Baroness MoHo Live 0161 834 8180
Big D & The Kids Table Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
Of Monsters And Men Academy 3 0161 832 1111
Skarlett Riot Retro Bar 0161 274 4892

NEWCASTLE
James Morrison O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

NEWPORT
Cerebral Ballzy/The Guns Le Pub 01633 221477

NORWICH
A Day Overdue/All So Reckless/In The Skies Brickmakers 01603 441 118

NOTTINGHAM
Blink-182/All American Rejects/ The Blackout Capital FM Arena 0115 948 4526
Opie Deino Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
Pennywise/The Flatliners Rock City 08713 100000

PORTRUSH
The Stamp Collective The Playhouse 028 7082 3917

SOUTHSEA
Dirty Sky Jones Cellars 02392 826249

ST ALBANS
Cardinal Jack Horn 01727 853 143

TRURO
El Schlong/Antari/The Bad Channels Live Bar 01872 264 611

WAKEFIELD
And Abide Snooty Fox 01924 374455

WOLVERHAMPTON
The Formula/The Elegant Chaos Robin 2 01902 497860

WREXHAM
Wooden Shjips Central Station 01978 358780

Howler, Library, Lancaster

DAN DENNISON, RICHARD JOHNSON, ANIKA MOTTERSHAW

THURSDAY
July 12

Anna Calvi, Somerset House, London

BATH
The Bayou Brothers/Sister Zydeco Band Chapel Arts Centre 01225 404445
BIRMINGHAM
Andrew Duhon/Kara Grainger Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333
Dopefight/General & Steak Scruffy Murphy's 0121 333 3201
Dr Teeth Big Band Jam House 0121 236 6677
Lakota Sioux/The Heist/The Getaway Club O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
BRIGHTON
Black Stone Cherry Concorde 2 01273 673 311
Destroyer The Haunt 01273 770 847
BRISTOL
The Koolaid Electric Company / Piatcions/The Super Psychedelic Cranberry Jam Band Spectacular Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Orca Team/Joanna Gruesome/ Mouse Deer Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
The Short Life Of Gracie The Cooler 0117 945 0999
CARDIFF
Caves/Dividers/Glass Avalanche The Moon Club
Hunted/Preacher/The Drowning Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
R-Seiliog/Y Pencadlys Gwdihw Café Bar 029 2039 7933
CHELMSFORD
Leanne Louise/Hadleigh Ford/ Guide Dogs For The Dead Hooga 01245 356 811
CREWE
Sink Or Swim/United Brakes The Imp 01270 255899
EDINBURGH
Black Manila/Thee Piatcions Voodoo Rooms 0131 556 7060
Crown Jewel Defense/Summerlin/ Final Chapter Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
EXETER
The Flatliners/The Cut Ups/Anti Vigilante Cavern Club 01392 495 370
GLASGOW
Beretta Suicide/Bec Sandridge/ Electric Vocation/Hoverboards The Garage Attic 0141 332 1120
Echofela Bar Bloc 0141 574 6066
Pronto Mama/Brazil Exists/The Little Kicks King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
The View/Vigo Thieves O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Wu Legends: Method Man/ Ghostface Killah/Raekwon/GZA O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
HOVE
Vanishing Shapes Of A Better World/The Finds/Jo Bywater Brunswick 01273 735254
LEEDS
Ian McNabb New Roscoe 0113 246 0778
Nadeem Leigh/Dave Calvert Grove Inn 0113 243 9254
Ti Amo/Halcyon Days/Wheels The New Conservatory 0113 246 1853
65daysofstatic Cockpit 0113 244 3446
LIVERPOOL
Blink-182/The Blackout/All American Rejects Echo Arena 0844 8000 400
Cerebral Ballzy Kazimier 0871 230 1094
Nite Jewel Eric's 0151 236 9994
LONDON
Anna Calvi/Eugene McGuinness/ Cold Specks Somerset House 020 7344 4444
Baroness Barfly 0870 907 0999
The Bermondsey Joyriders Rhythm Factory 020 7247 9386
Black Sixteen Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Blindsided/The Blind Hearts Monarch 0871 230 1094
Bobby Womack Heaven 020 7930 2020
Death Pedals/Mayors Of Miyazaki/ Francobollo Macbeth 020 7739 5095
Funeral Suits/Towns/Torches Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Graf Orlock/Let It Die/Lich/Regimes Windmill 020 8671 0700
Howler Hippodrome 020 85414411
Of Monsters And Men Scala 020 7833 2022
Paper Boats/A Tip Toe Peel 020 8546 3516
Poliça Rough Trade East 020 7392 7788
Queen With Adam Lambert HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
Release The Bats Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
Robert Plant HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Sunless 97/Sophie Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Super Crazy Fun Fun/Padraig Ryan Grove Tavern 020 8543 9881
Teebs/Nosaj Thing/Eskmo XOYO 020 7729 5959
Tigercats/The Smittens/Fulhast Old Queen's Head 020 7354 9993
Viper Central The Harrison 020 7916 3113
Void/Aeternum/Morktar/Virophage Grosvenor 0871 223 7992
MANCHESTER
Esoterica Grand Central 0871 230 1094
Wooden Shjips/Hookworms/Kult Country Sound Control 0161 236 0340
MILTON KEYNES
Arcane Roots Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864
NOTTINGHAM
Alejandro Escovedo/The Sensitive Boys Maze 0115 947 5650
OXFORD
El Schlong/Mother Corona/ Refugees Of Culture Cellar 01865 244 761
Neil Anguilley/The Spin Trio Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156
PORTSMOUTH
Futures Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911
PRESTON
Serious Sam Barrett/Pine Hill Haints Continental 01772 499 425
READING
Uneven Structure The Facebar 0118 956 8188
SHEFFIELD
Arnocorps Corporation 0114 276 0262
STIRLING
Larkin Poe Tollbooth 0871 230 1094
TOTNES
Cahalen Morrison & Eli West The Barrel House
WAKEFIELD
Casino Snooty Fox 01924 374455
WREXHAM
The Milk Central Station 01978 358780
YORK
DJ Phoenix/DJ Oreo The Duchess 01904 641 413

FRIDAY
July 13

BIRMINGHAM
The Red Lemons Jam House 0121 236 6677
Slab/El Schlong/Nebukadnezza Scruffy Murphy's 0121 333 3201
BOLTON
Linda Campbell Band Railway Venue 01204 306 450
BRIGHTON
Gunshot Straight/The Icarus Youth/The Dead Celebs The Hope 01273 723 568
The Meow Meows World's End 01273 692311
Pagan Altar The Haunt 01273 770 847
BRISTOL
Arcane Roots Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Citizen Fish/King Tut's Revenge/ Private Gain Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Dragonflies/Vergin Sunset/ Burning Bandets Thunderbolt 07791 319 614
Jasper In The Company Of Others/ Crows Parliament Stag & Hounds 0117 929 7048
Mr Twist/Danny Zero/Lion Bar Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
CARDIFF
Mickey Pearce/Falcon Lake Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Orca Team Buffalo Bar 02920 310312
Third Party/Ringo Stalin/Dave Grooveslave Gwdihw Café Bar 029 2039 7933
CHELMSFORD
The Kubricks/Tall Dark Friend Hooga 01245 356 811
DERRY
Triggerman/By Any Means/ Libidoswitch Peadar O'Donnells Gweedore Bar 02871 263513
EDINBURGH
KRM/Luke & Jake Charlotte/Tom Walker The Lane 0131 629 9891
Trapped Mice/Sebastian Dangerfield/Plastic Animals Wee Red Bar 0131 229 1442
EXETER
Arrows Of Love Cavern Club 01392 495 370
Modestep Phoenix 01392 667080
FALMOUTH
The Bayou Brothers Miss Peapod's 0871 230 1094
GLASGOW
Bombskare/Lorraine McCauley And The Borderlands Galgael Trust 07926954801
Brawther La Cheetah 0141 221 4851
Chris McManus Budda Bar 0141 332 2010
Hector Bizerk/Madhat McGore/ Bigg Taj King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Lady Antebellum SECC 0141 248 3000
Nite Jewel Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
GUILDFORD
GUILFEST Jools Holland & His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra/ Buzzcocks/The Straits/Heaven 17/Black Spiders/Devil Sold His Soul/Benga/Subscape Stoke Park 0871 230 1094
LEEDS
The Delvaux Grove Inn 0113 243 9254
Jamilah Barry Wardrobe 0113 222 3434
Kasiuss/A Plastic Rose Cockpit 0113 244 3446
This Broken Empire New Roscoe 0113 246 0778
LIVERPOOL
The Polyveldts/The Bluejays & Friends Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
LONDON
Africa Hitech/Kwesachu/Adrian Sherwood Village Underground 020 7422 7505
Alex Metric/Moonlight Matters Nest 020 7354 9993
Bellowhead Hampton Swimming Pool 020 8255 1116
Betty Wright Jazz Café 020 7916 6060
Crows/Sisters Barfly 0870 907 0999

CLUB NME
LONDON
SISSY & THE BLISTERS
FRIDAY, JULY 13
KOKO
0844 847 2258

The Cut Ups/Above Them/Glass Avalanche Windmill 020 8671 0700
Faith 'N' Fury/Follow You Home 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Fourplay Assembly Hall 020 8577 6969
George Barnett & The Ninth Wave/ The Theme Grand 020 7223 6523
HARD ROCK CALLING Soundgarden/ The Mars Volta/The Stooges/ Skindred/Kids In Glass Houses/ Black Stone Cherry Hyde Park 020 7195 2133
The Toasters Boston Arms 020 7272 8153
Jamurai/Grigio/Mista Magic The Social
Jan Hammered/Amp + Deck XOYO 020 7729 5959
Josephine Lloyd/Lilly Zazou/ Mishaped Pearls The Harrison 020 7916 3113
La Gosse/Joseph Williams/Ricky Ward Cargo 020 7749 7840
Moda/Roska/Jacques Lu Cont/ Foamo Fabric 020 7336 8898
MT Live Bussey Building
Nick Hoppner Corsica Studios 0207 703 4760
The North Wood The Wheelbarrow
Sissy & The Blisters Club NME @ KOKO 0870 4325527
(The Death Of) Six By Seven Hope & Anchor 020 7354 1312
Wu Legends: Method Man/ Ghostface Killah/Raekwon/GZA HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
MANCHESTER
Alison Krauss & Union Station O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
Aseyda/Jesus In India/The Winnebagos Night & Day Café 0161 236 1822
Assemblage 23 Club Academy 0161 832 1111
Boddickers/The Sandels/Rapid Gullivers 0161 832 5899
Pocket Central Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Your New Antique/North Glass Jungle/Reva/That Hidden Promise Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
MILTON KEYNES
The Birthday Suit/Nick Fisher Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864
NEWCASTLE
Eeves Head Of Steam 0191 232 4379
Head Of Light Entertainment/ Iceni/Parastatic Telegraph 0191 232 0503
NORWICH
Leonard/Wicked Faith/Ember Brickmakers 01603 441 118
NOTTINGHAM
A Day Overdue/The Call Back Academy/All So Reckless Rock City 08713 100000
The Distillery Blues Band Test Match 0115 981 1481
Our Helical Mind/Thebrokendoor Maze 0115 947 5650
OXFORD
Charlotte Church Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775
Futures/Don Broco/Natives O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Molotov Jukebox Cellar 01865 244 761
The Old Grinding Young Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156
PRESTON
Mugstar/RememberRemember/Evil Blizzard Continental 01772 499 425
READING
Anti Nowhere League Sub89 0871 230 1094
SHEFFIELD
Wooden Shjips/Strange Partners/ Two Skies Plug 0114 276 7093
SHREWSBURY
Ace & Vis/CJ Beatz Cellars 01743 241455
SOUTHWOLD
LATITUDE Bon Iver/White Lies/Lana Del Rey/Yeasayer/Metronomy/Kurt Vile /Tune-Yards/Chairlift/First Aid Kit/Twin Shadow Henham Park 0870 060 3775
STOKE ON TRENT
The Get Alongs Sugarmill 01782 214 991
Wirespider The Holly Bush 01782 502 116
ST ALBANS
Short Straws/Dead Pinups/ Millionairo Horn 01727 853 143
SWANSEA
Needtobreathe Sin City 01792654226
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Cerebral Ballzy The Forum 0871 277 7101
WAKEFIELD
Chris Helme The Hop 0871 230 1094
Deny All Reason Snooty Fox 01924 374455
WOLVERHAMPTON
Eyes Of The Raven/Under Blackened Skies/Left Unscarred Slade Room 0870 320 7000
WREXHAM
Tek One Central Station 01978 358780
YORK
Spear Of Destiny Fibbers 01904 651 250
The Undertones/Doyle & The Fourfathers The Duchess 01904 641 413

SATURDAY
July 14

Wild Beasts, The Haunt, Brighton

BATH
Ned Evett Chapel Arts Centre 0122 5404445
BEDFORD
Ninja Goldfish/Without Reason/Old School Reasons/Telstar Esquires 01234 340120
BELFAST
Fubar/Red Eye/The Fourth Exit Rosetta Bar 028 9064 9297
BIRMINGHAM
Big Balloon/Eat Y'Self Pretty Adam & Eve 0121 693 1500
Birthday Sex/ESO Asylum 0121 233 1109
French Touch/High Violet O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
The Legendary Shack Shakers/The Dirt Daubers HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
The Whiskey Syndicate/JD And The FDCs/Crooked Dawn O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
BRIGHTON
The Caezars/Doggone Honkabilly Band/Dave Mumbles Concorde 2 01273 673 311
Erol Alkan/Daniel Avery Digital 01273 202407
Sentient/Steffe Sharpstrings Green Door Store 07894 267 053
Wild Beasts The Haunt 01273 770 847
BRISTOL
Antibang Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
The Vibrators Thunderbolt 07791 319 614
CAMBRIDGE
All We Are/Hella Better Dancer/Model Staggs St Paul's Centre 01223 354 186
Mallory Knox Junction 01223 511511
CARLISLE
Manhattan Project/Shameful Bronze Brickyard 01228 512 220
COVENTRY
The Broken Rebels/Not By Design Kasbah 024 7655 4473
DERRY
Dead 'Til Friday/Making Monsters/Wyldling/Controlled Conflict Playhouse 028 7126 8027
DUNFERMLINE
People Places Maps PJ Molloys
EDINBURGH
Luna Semara/Stephan Bodzin Liquid Room 0131 225 2564
GLASGOW
The Bad Men/The Day I Snapped O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Bec Sandridge/Cat Caldwell/Manta Maggie May's 0141 548 1350
John Wean/The NK Jays/Seed King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
GUILDFORD
GUILFEST Olly Murs/Tulisa/Gary Numan/Nouvelle Vague/Cher Lloyd/Skindred/Rolo Tomassi/Andy C Stoke Park 0871 230 1094
LEEDS
The Blind Dead McJones Band Grove Inn 0113 243 9254
Crazy Spirit/Mob Rules/Heroin Diet/Perspex Flesh Wharf Chambers
Drag Your Heels Packhorse 0113 245 3980
The Gonzos/The Disguises/Elliott's Incentive Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Hope & Social Kirkstall Abbey 0113 230 5492
Kwame D/Dave Willacy The Owl 0113 256 5242
The Matadors/Kleine Schweine Baby Jupiter 0113 242 1202
Nite Jewel Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Rory Holl & The Men New Roscoe 0113 246 0778
The Ruckus/Selby Green/The Crafters Empire 01132 420868
Suis La Lune The Well 0113 2440474
Unite Eiger 0113 244 4105
LEICESTER
Trwbador Crumblin' Cookie 0116 253 1212
LIVERPOOL
Alison Krauss & Union Station Philharmonic Hall 0871 230 1094
Dirtblonde/Bird Tabac 0151 709 9502
7 Day Weekend/A Day Overdue Picket 0151 708 5318
LONDON
The Acoustic Strawbs Half Moon 020 7274 2733
The Adolescents/Social Schism/The Dirty Rotten Scoundrels Jamm 020 7274 5537
Anchorsong/DJ Kentaro XOYO 020 7729 5959
Assemblage 23/Cybercide/Das Fluff O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Bad Habits Underworld 020 7482 1932
HARD ROCK CALLING Bruce Springsteen/Amy Macdonald/Lady Antebellum/Dawes/Needtobreathe/Nightwatchmen Hyde Park 020 7195 2133
Coupe De Ville Barfly 0870 907 0999
Datsik/Modestep KOKO 020 7388 3222
The Dead Pirates/Crash Island/Madame So The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Death Rattle Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937
Emperor X/Michael Feerick The Waiting Room 020 7241 5511
Harri/Fake Cargo 020 7749 7840
In Isolation Good Ship 020 7372 2544
Jonny Cola And The A-Grades/Alphabet Backwards/Blindness Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Kid Creole & The Coconuts Hampton Swimming Pool 020 8255 1116
Lilac's Daughter/Great Among Yesterday Peel 020 8546 3516
Michael Mayer/Clorinde/Alex Monk Corsica Studios 0207 703 4760
Nina Nesbitt Borderline 020 7734 5547
Prophet/Preacher Hidden 020 7820 6613
Queen With Adam Lambert HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
RP/Loaded Guns/Heels Club Surya 020 7713 6262
Sham 69 Electric Brixton 020 7274 2290
Shrag/Orca Team/Joanna Gruesome Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Sound Of Guns/Fractures/The Ramona Flowers Queen Of Hoxton 020 7422 0958
Superfreq/2020 Soundsystem/Mike Shannon Fabric 020 7336 8898
Trojan Sound System/Channel One/Reggae Roast Plan B 08701 165421
Waze & Odyssey/Riotous Rockers/Alvin C Lock Tavern 020 7485 0909
MANCHESTER
Anna Greenwood/Hot Gusset/The Dream Bears Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
The Escobars Gullivers 0161 832 5899
The Flatliners MoHo Live 0161 834 8180
Hellbound Rebels/Skies Turn Black/Chaos Reigns Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
Mr Scruff Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
The Ninth Watch Night & Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
The Portlands Academy 3 0161 832 1111
The Toasters/Bad Transmission Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
Wu Legends: Method Man/Ghostface Killah/Raekwon/GZA HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355
MILTON KEYNES
Swedish House Mafia/Calvin Harris/Madeon/Example National Bowl 0870 333 6208
Video Volta & The Deer Friends Watershed 07935 641 660
NEWPORT
BIG FREE FESTIVAL The Angharad Band/The Widders/Jawahir/Isca Morrismen/James Froud Band Hanbury Field
OXFORD
Alejandro Escovedo Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516
Perfume Genius Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775
READING
Kinky Boot Beasts/Shoot For The King Plug'n'Play 0118 958 1447
SHEFFIELD
Martin Stephenson/Helen McCookerybook Shakespeare 0114 234 9636
Pocket Satellite Cobden View Hotel 0114 266 3714
SOUTHAMPTON
Jordan Peak/Jody Hannan/Craig Rogan Junk Club 023 8033 5445
SOUTHSEA
The Beatmakers Cellars 02392 826249
SOUTHWOLD
LATITUDE Elbow/Laura Marling/The Horrors/SBTRKT/Zola Jesus/Django Django/Low/Lianne La Havas/Smoke Fairies Henham Park 0870 060 3775
STOKE ON TRENT
The Sherry Counsellors Sugarmill 01782 214 991
SWANSEA
Cartoon Violence/Miacca/Fight The Bear Garage 01792 475147
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Don Broco/Hildamay The Forum 0871 277 7101
WAKEFIELD
The Ran-Tan Waltz The Hop 0871 230 1094
Stolen Earth Snooty Fox 01924 374455
WOLVERHAMPTON
Tyla And The Dogs D'Amour Slade Room 0870 320 7000
YORK
A Joker's Rage/Velvet Star/BastRad Fibbers 01904 651 250
Geno Washington/Yoyo Blues The Duchess 01904 641 413

SUNDAY
July 15

BIRMINGHAM
Blink-182 LG Arena 0121 780 4133
Wu Legends: Ghostface Killah/Method Man/Raekwon/GZA HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
BRIGHTON
Asbest Fishbowl 01273 777 505
Spear Of Destiny The Hydrant 01273 608 313
BRISTOL
A Plastic Rose Thekla 08713 100000
Nine Lights/Point To The Sun Fleece 0117 945 0996
Sadie Fleming Seven Stars 0117 3763970
CARDIFF
A Day Overdue/The Call Back Academy The Moon Club
CHELMSFORD
Marc Halls Hooga 01245 356 811
DARTFORD
Adam Ant & The Good, The Mad And The Lovely Posse Orchard 01322 220000
EDINBURGH
David Bridie/Frank Yamma Voodoo Rooms 0131 556 7060
FALMOUTH
The Adolescents/Pettybone/Bangers The Fish Factory
GATESHEAD
Triage/League Of Souls Three Tuns 0191 487 0666
GLASGOW
Cold Chisel O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Dividing The Silence Stairway 0141 221 1009
Xavia/Lost In Audio/Atlas King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
GUILDFORD
Band Of Brothers Boileroom 01483 539 539
GUILFEST Bryan Ferry/Chic/Candi Staton/Ash/Young Guns/The Undertones/Sub Focus/Mungo Jerry Stoke Park 0871 230 1094
LEEDS
Karin Park Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Test Transmission Northern Monkey 0113 242 6630
The Tom Attah Blues Explosion Sandinista! 0113 305 0372
LEICESTER
Steve Krakow Musician 0116 251 0080
The Toasters Soundhouse 07830 425555
LONDON
Acrid Lactations/Chora/Chastity Potato Sebright Arms 020 7729 0937
Brutality Will Prevail/Think Twice/Forsaken Grosvenor 0871 223 7992
De'Borah/Emily & The Woods The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Jon Oliva's Pain/Max Pie/Never A Hero Garage 020 7607 1818
The Koolaid Electric Company/Bonfire Nights/Dark Bells Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
The Mars Volta HMV Forum 020 7344 0044
Neneh Cherry & The Thing Village Underground 020 7422 7505
HARD ROCK CALLING Paul Simon/Jimmy Cliff/Christina Perri/Guillemots/Big Country/Alison Krauss Hyde Park 020 7195 2133
Renator Ratier/Cormac/Jacob Husley Fabric 020 7336 8898
Serious Sam Barrett/The Pine Hill Haints Windmill 020 8671 0700
Splintered Soul/Bloodshed/Zodiac N Black Underworld 020 7482 1932
Tindersticks/Emmy The Great Somerset House 020 7344 4444
MANCHESTER
Andrew Hargreaves/Michael Holland Common Bar 0161 832 9245
Lady Antebellum O2 Apollo 0870 401 8000
Nite Jewel Soup Kitchen 0161 236 5100
Sister Elements/Michael Cretu Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Suis La Lune/Veils/Goodtime Boys Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
MILTON KEYNES
Miacca Watershed 07935 641 660
NEWCASTLE
Crown Jewel Defense/Summerlin O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Richard Dawson/Delta Dog Cumberland Arms 0191 265 6151
NORWICH
Lee Vasey Big Band Brickmakers 01603 441 118
NOTTINGHAM
The Silver Seas Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
OXFORD
Dawes Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516
READING
Chapters/Entropy/Actions To Onslaught The Facebar 0118 956 8188
SHEFFIELD
Ian McNabb Greystones 0114 266 5599
SOUTHWOLD
LATITUDE Paul Weller/Bat For Lashes/Simple Minds/Wild Beasts/M83/Battles/St Vincent/Perfume Genius/Alabama Shakes Henham Park 0870 060 3775
WOLVERHAMPTON
Soltice/Credo/Grey Lady Down Robin 2 01902 497860
YORK
Darrell Scott/Boss Caine The Duchess 01904 641 413

Bat For Lashes, Latitude Festival, Southwold

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MONDAY
July 16

Diana Vickers, Deaf Institute, Manchester

ABERDEEN
Make Sparks/You & What We Are/Coasts The Tunnels 01224 211121

BATH
Rufus Wainwright Forum 01225 463993

BIRMINGHAM
A Day Overdue/The Call Back Academy/Relentless In Love The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
Nite Jewel O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON
Las Kellies/Pre Pubescent Pugilists/Skinny Girl Diet Green Door Store 07894 267 053
Red River Dialect/The Female Thief Prince Albert 01273 730 499

BRISTOL
The Legendary Shack Shakers Fleece 0117 945 0996
Ministry O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Tom C Wilson/That Hidden Promise/Spaces Between Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144

GLASGOW
Daniel Docherty/Craig Fagan King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

LEEDS
British Racing Green/BoxSmash/Heavyball/The Grand Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros Irish Centre 0113 248 9208

LONDON
Dylan LeBlanc The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Ewan D Rodgers The Victory 020 7724 5509
Lady Antebellum HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
M83/Susanne Sundfor Somerset House 020 7344 4444
Needtobreathe O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Shadows Chasing Ghosts/Hildamay/Floods Barfly 0870 907 0999
Shit And Shine Power Lunches Arts Cafe
Veils/Suis La Lune/Goodtime Boys Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

MANCHESTER
Arcane Roots Night & Day Café 0161 236 1822
Cold Chisel HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355
Crown Jewel Defense/Summerlin/Final Chapter FAC 251 0161 27 27 251
Diana Vickers Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

MILTON KEYNES
The Pine Hill Haints/Serious Sam Barrett Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864

NEWCASTLE
7 Day Weekend/Hey Alaska/Lost Alone Trillians 0191 232 1619

NEWPORT
Wu Legends: Method Man/Ghostface Killah/Raekwon/GZA Centre 01633 662666

NOTTINGHAM
A Plastic Rose Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

OXFORD
Uneven Structure Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156

YORK
Man Without Country/Karin Park The Duchess 01904 641 413

TUESDAY
July 17

ABERDEEN
Dividing The Silence The Tunnels 01224 211121

BELFAST
Ministry Queen's University 028 9097 3106

BIRMINGHAM
Goldenclime/Oh Stockholm Roadhouse 0121 624 2920
Kevin Figes/Mike Outram/Dan Moore Jam House 0121 236 6677
Lady Antebellum/Kacey Musgraves O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Uneven Structure Actress & Bishop 0121 236 7426

BRIGHTON
Dylan LeBlanc Prince Albert 01273 730 499
Mal Webb Latest Music Bar 01273 687 171
Nite Jewel Green Door Store 07894 267 053

BRISTOL
Goodtime Boys/Suis La Lune/Veils Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Svalbard/Notebooks/Jesse Ventura Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144

CARDIFF
Arcane Roots The Moon Club

EDINBURGH
Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds/Folks Castle 020 7771 2000

EXETER
Howler Phoenix 01392 667080

GLASGOW
Canterbury/Eras Stereo 0141 576 5018
Man Without Country/Karin Park School Of Art 0141 353 4530

LEEDS
Another Life/Inlaze/Distorted Sky/Euthemia/Glassbody O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Jonathan Wilson Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Juffage/Black Moth/Phonetics Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Weekends/Etai Keshiki/Los Pecadores Wharf Chambers

LONDON
Bliss N Eso Garage 020 7607 1818
Broka/Banksman/Patchwork Garage (Upstairs) 0871 230 1094
The Crookes/The Kabeedies/Panda Cubs Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
David Ford/Piney Gir The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Madonna/LMFAO/Martin Solveig Hyde Park 0870 166 3663
Paloma Faith/Seye Somerset House 020 7344 4444
The Pharcyde KOKO 020 7388 3222
Post War Years Birthday's
Robert Ellis/Jinnwoo Windmill 020 8671 0700
Silent Descent/Mask Of Virtue Underworld 020 7482 1932
Trick The Fox The Wheelbarrow
Warbringer/Elm Street Barfly 0870 907 0999

MANCHESTER
The Adolescents Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
A Plastic Rose/The Hyena Kill Dry Bar 0161 236 5920

MILTON KEYNES
Home Service Stables 01908 280800
The Treatment Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864

NORWICH
The Toasters/Project MultiVitamin/Faintest Idea Waterfront 01603 632 717

NOTTINGHAM
Crown Jewel Defense/Summerlin/Final Chapter Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484

PORTRUSH
Brendan Quinn The Playhouse 028 7082 3917

LMFAO, Hyde Park, London

BEHIND NME LINES

NEW-FOUND FAME FINDS BLUR AT SEA

*As screaming fans flock to see **Blur's** coastal tour in 1995, **Johnny Dee** finds the Britpop chart-toppers cracking up under the glare of the press*

I used to be in Blur. Well, for an afternoon. And to be honest it was only a photographer from the *Eastern Daily Press* who mistook me for a member of the band I was trailing around Britain during their 1995 seaside tour. It made the front page. There we were on the roof of the Ocean Rooms in Gorleston-on-Sea, Norfolk – Alex, Damon and some overweight bloke having a fag (that'll be me, not Dave or Graham), looking down on the scenes of teen hysteria below as the local youth grappled with the fact that Britain's coolest band had landed in the last town on Earth you'd expect to find Britain's coolest band.

It was the height of Britpop. Just a month earlier Blur had made national news by beating Oasis in their singles chart battle. While the Mancunians were simultaneously touring the nation's leisure-centre barns, Blur were ditching the stadiums for tenner-a-night shows in small, rundown venues that time (and paint) had forgotten. In Bournemouth, the paths of the two rival bands nearly crossed, with Blur booked into the chintzy end-of-pier Showbar nightclub and Oasis headlining the gigantic conference centre. For some reason, dates mysteriously shuffled.

Earlier in the tour, after the show at Oscars nightclub in Clacton-on-Sea, the pier owner opened all the rides for the band, crew and guests, which included Damon's then-girlfriend Justine Frischmann of Elastica, assorted members of Pulp and a 21-year-old comedian called Matt Lucas. The night culminated in a surreal hour-long drink-driving session on the dodgems. It was all great larks, but behind it all, strange tensions were brewing. The four band members reacted to the increasing media attention differently. Dave was utterly unaffected, happy to stay in the background; Alex saw it as an opportunity to enhance his already loquacious lifestyle; and Damon was living as if he was in a movie – quite possibly *That'll Be The Day* starring Ringo Starr and David Essex. Graham, though, was hating every second. I snatched separate interviews with Blur's two main players, and the pair could not have been more different. Damon took me swimming, treated me to a hedonistic night at a seedy casino and chatted in his hotel room pre-show while he shaved. "Thousands of girls would like to be in your position," he told me without a trace of irony. Being around Graham was more tense. No girls would want to be in my position when I got round to talking to him in a subterranean hotel bar in Bournemouth. Our conversation turned to Colchester and his early experiences of going out in his hometown. The more pubs he mentioned, the angrier he got, until suddenly he snapped, picked up my Dictaphone and hurled it against the wall, smashing it to smithereens before storming away into the night.

> *Graham was hating every second of the increasing fame*

Damon asked for the incident not to be mentioned in the article but Graham, who'd mellowed by the next morning, insisted it should be. And to make up for Graham's moment of lager-fuelled tape-recorder rage, I found myself in Berlin on the road with the band again a month later. Away from the attentions of the UK tabloids, they were all more relaxed and open. Probably *too* open. In their dressing room after the show, news filtered through that a famous German groupie was waiting to meet the band. When hearing of this middle-aged lady's party trick – being able to lactate at will – only one member of the band seemed excited at the prospect. He was a man who, in years to come, would become more famous for his cheese-making than his bass playing. I like to think I was there when he first became turned on by dairy production.

Tears and cheers greet Blur

NME scribe Johnny Dee 'joins' Blur for the night. (Top) The real Blur - Graham, Alex, Dave and Damon

NME

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A BAG OF NME SWAG

CLUES ACROSS

1 Animated articles on Linkin Park's new album (6-6)
9 Buddy Holly And The Crickets hit, also title of Britain's first TV pop music show (2-3)
10 Zulu Winter have a clever way with words on this song (6-6)
11 A terrible aural experience from Scissor Sisters (5)
14 Harry ___, McFly drummer and winner of 2011 series of *Strictly Come Dancing* (4)
15 Come into this world by Jet (3-4)
17 Others, perhaps, take in a hundred from Foster The People (7)
21 Band is in treble trouble (10)
23 A mystery as to why En Vogue sang this number (6)
24+20D Big Country hit with same title as a James Dean movie (4-2-4)
26 (See 8 down)
29 No sudden ending to the music on album from '80s indie band Loop (4-3)
31 "*I knew ____ ___, we'd never part/So hello ____ ___, goodbye heart*", from '60s hit by Ricky Nelson (4-3)
33 The orgy Danny arranged is Garbage (9)
34 Robert ___, American who invented a certain keyboard (4)

CLUES DOWN

1 Edwyn Collins getting less than 40 winks (6-5)
2 Big Pink smooth material (6)
3+30D "*And when the lights are low, and it's time to go, that's when I ____ ____ ____ ____*", Fleetwood Mac (4-4-4-2-3)
4 As worn when dancing to a Miles Davis album? (4)
5 Frontman of Mott The Hoople who was 'Once Bitten Twice Shy' as a solo artist (3-6)
6 Phil or brother Boon ____, founder members of Level 42 (5)
7 ___ Stadium in New York was where The Beatles played their legendary record-breaking concert in 1965 (4)
8+26A Kings Of Leon with a number to boot (4-5)
12 ___ Saints got into a state coming up with 'Something Good' (4)
13 Desmond Dekker played his cards right in getting this group's backing (4)
16+28D He has just released his 34th studio album 'Americana' (4-5)
18 British Afropop band best known for their '70s hit 'Sunshine Day' (7)
19 Indie band who chewed over going into 'Showbiz' (3)
20 (See 24 across)
22 Charlotte Hatherley so drab at arrangements on this song (8)
25 "*Due to lack of interest tomorrow is cancelled*", 2007 (4)
27 "*I find the__ that lets you slide inside/Kiss the girl, she's not behind the door*", from Oasis' 'Roll With It' (3)
28 (See 16 down)
30 (See 3 down)
31 'Sugar & Spice' girl with a bit of a tummy ache (3)
32 Half open to let in a Warp Records act (1-1-1)

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First correct one out of the hat wins a bag of CDs, T-shirts and books!

JUNE 16 ANSWERS

ACROSS
1+10A When Your Garden's Overgrown, 9 Arena, 11+34A Out Spaced, 12 Zutons, 14+29D Free Time, 15 Skid Row, 16 My Life, 19+20A Lisa Stansfield, 23 Sun, 24 Alt, 25 Lobo, 26 Astor, 28 Jet, 30 West One, 31 Dan, 33 Aim, 35 Hidden.

DOWN
1 Weapons, 2+22D Electric Soft Parade, 3 Year Zero, 4 UFO, 5+16D Green Manalishi, 6 Rags, 7 Eton Rifles, 8 Sunset, 13 Town To Town, 17 Lifeblood, 18 LDN, 19 Lyla, 21 Luke, 27 Soap, 28 Jean, 32 Ad.

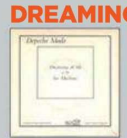
COLLECTORS' CORNER

DEPECHE MODE

Here are the music gems that no Depeche Mode fan should be without

WORDS: ALAN WOODHOUSE PHOTO: REX

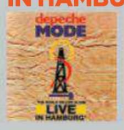
DREAMING OF ME (1981)



The group's first single, written by founder member Vince Clarke, only made Number 57 in the UK singles chart and was left off the UK version of the band's debut album 'Speak And Spell' (although subsequent CD reissues have added the song). It remains a big fan favourite, as does B-side 'Ice Machine'.

Need To Know: The single – and many other recordings by Depeche Mode and Clarke's next band, Yazoo – was recorded at Blackwing Studios in south London, just a stone's throw from *NME*'s office.

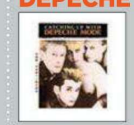
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN AND LIVE IN HAMBURG (1984)



Live document of the band filmed on their 'Some Great Reward' tour, promoting the hugely successful album of the same name (yet to be released on DVD, sadly). Seventeen of the 19 songs performed at the concert in question are featured, but for reasons unknown 'Ice Machine' and 'Puppets' did not make the cut.

Need To Know: The title refers to a lyric on the 'Some Great Reward' track 'Somebody', which is sung by Martin Gore.

CATCHING UP WITH DEPECHE MODE (1985)



American-only compilation which cherry-picks from the group's first four albums, back when DM were more of a slightly cheesy synthpop-driven outfit than the stadium titans they became in the early '90s. The tracklisting (and sleeve) is very similar to the 'Singles 81-85' compilation, but with added rarities.

Need To Know: Another nine-track compilation, 'People Are People', was released in the US the previous year to capitalise on the popularity of the single of the same name.

DAVE GAHAN – PAPER MONSTERS (2003)

Frustrated at his lack of songwriting input – Martin Gore did all of Depeche Mode's writing – singer Gahan embarked on a solo career while the band were on a break. The album was well received, as were the live dates, which included a stop-off at Glastonbury, and as a result of his endeavours Gahan has contributed songs to the last two Depeche Mode albums.

Need To Know: Gahan released a second solo LP, 'Hourglass', in 2007.

FANMAIL

YOU GET IN TOUCH, WE RESPOND, THINGS GET OUT OF HAND

Edited by Leonie Cooper

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The Big Issue

What everyone's talking about this week

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LETTER OF THE WEEK
STONED LOVE

From: Jamie Armstrong
To: *NME*

Last Friday was possibly one of the greatest days I've ever experienced. Being 18, I'm obviously too young to have witnessed the impact the Roses had in their prime. However when they decided to reform and *NME* went mad, as did a lot of music fanatics, I decided to check them out. A few months later I found myself on a packed tram heading towards a muddy Heaton Park with my mate. The vibe surrounding Manchester was unreal and something we'd never witnessed before. Seeing so many people reliving their teens and us experiencing the Roses live for the first time was something I won't forget. Being thrown around to massive anthems like 'This Is The One' will be a memory I'll never forget! Viva Stone Roses!

NME's response...

Even a cursory glance at the 225,000-odd people who streamed into Heaton Park showed us that Jamie wasn't the only fan in attendance who wasn't even a twinkle in his parents' loins when the Roses burst onto the scene in the late '80s. The gigs saw a truly cross-generational crowd in attendance, with teenagers, their parents, and a whole bunch who were even older all basking in the glow of one of the finest indie bands ever. This is part of the beauty of magnificent music and its power to bring different people together. Some of the songs that Ian, John, Mani and Reni played the other week might be at least 23 years old, but they were just as exciting at these gigs as they were in 1989. These shows prove how the band have been more than capable of standing the test of time. Back in the day their songs were new, innovative and exciting, now they're pieces of history – not to mention the backbone of one of the best days of Jamie's life (and a fair few other folk too...) – LC

MORE MONKEY BUSINESS

From: Craig Macleay
To: *NME*

I know with regard to Heaton Park, that people will complain about the poor sound quality, ponder how Ian Brown has been able to put 'singer' as his occupation for the past two decades, moan about the length of the bar queues and, correctly, point out the mid-set bit fell flat ('Something's Burning', really?). However, the end section of a mesmeric 'Waterfall', an anthemic 'Love Spreads', the stratospheric chorus of 'Made Of Stone', a euphoric 'This Is The One' and the plain incredible 'I Am The Resurrection' was extraordinary. Stone Roses mass karaoke won't change the world, but it was astounding fun.

From: Rich
To: *NME*

Twenty-three years we've waited. That's me and the missus patiently hoping and praying for this chance to experience what has always been, for us, the greatest band in the world. We missed them, for reasons beyond our control, in the '80s and '90s. Bought tickets to see them especially at Glastonbury '95 but still it wasn't to be... until now, July 1 at Heaton Park. From the guttural rumblings of 'I Wanna Be Adored' to the kaleidoscopic swirl of 'Where Angels Play', The Stone Roses were there, finally, right before our eyes and ears, providing the soundtrack to a generation. The songs still sound so vital and me and the wife sang along, exchanged knowing glances and fought back the happy tears. I don't think we'll ever forget the moment we looked at each other as Ian Brown sang, "*When you're so much in love you don't know just how much you can stand*". And then the young "gentleman" behind us in the crowd decides to pull his cock out of his trousers and urinate all over us! Thank you for that, young sir! What was more unbelievable was your incredulous reaction that you didn't seem to think you were doing anything wrong?! And your reply of "Well, move forward, then?" Fuck you, little badman, next time you might lose your shlong!

From: *NME*
To: Craig Macleay, Rich

Just a small sample of the truckload of letters we got about the Roses this week – almost all showing undying love towards the band. And Rich, what can we say? Have you showered yet? – LC

From: Ingrid Allan
To: *NME*

While I enjoyed your 100 Greatest Songs special (June 23), it had the unfortunate effect of awakening me to one of the worst problems facing music today: the novelty record. 'Common People' never got to Number One for the same reason 'Wonderwall' didn't – because the nation's grannies were too busy blubbing over Robson & Jerome. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that another of my all-time favourites – Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' – also never made the top spot. I say we start a Facebook campaign to make either 'Common People' or 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' the Number One single they never were – it worked for Rage Against the Machine.

From: *NME*
To: Ingrid Allan

Or... or – now bear with us on this one – we make The Ultimate Indie Novelty single,

RICHARD JOHNSON, ANDY WILLSHER

'Common Wonder Will Tear Us Apart', featuring Jarvis Cocker and Noel Gallagher as the alt.Robson & Jerome. Both of them can sport freshly pressed grey shirts and severe Teutonic haircuts in tribute to Ian Curtis, before winking saucily at all the grannies. It'll be massive (just as long as we beat Hurts' comeback...) – LC

PUNK WOE

From: John Stainton
To: *NME*

I know this is a bit late, but I'm a subscriber currently in Afghanistan and the June 23 issue only arrived today. My heart sank when I saw the cover as I thought the 100 songs list would be like so many other such lists: full of this week's thing that no-one will remember next week let alone in 60 years' time. I was wrong. It's not a bad list, but FFS, where was 'Another Girl, Another Planet' by The Only Ones? Good grief.

From: *NME*
To: John Stainton

That's because its permanent place in the awesome punk-pop disco constantly taking place in my head means it can't be loaned out for inclusion in lists. Sorry for the inconvenience – LC

PUSHED OFF THE PIER

From: Andre Matt
To: *NME*

I was thinking about this and we could surely use a 'Where are they now' kind of view on some of the people that were so promising this last decade but then suddenly disappeared. C'mon, Late Of The Pier. These guys could take the world burning in flames with a second album. They were doing things that only now people are starting to get their ears on with the sickest performances I've ever seen. And then, overnight, they all stopped? I can hardly believe that Sam Dust, once Number Five in an *NME* Cool List, would be taking a nine-to-five job these days. So, please, find these guys. And if possible, threaten them at gunpoint to make a second album.

From: *NME*
To: Andre Matt

Come now, Andre, violent threats won't get you anywhere – unless you're a Dennis Hopper character. Asking nicely sometimes works though, so Late Of The Pier, if you're reading this, pretty please can you release some new music, because Andre thinks you're sick. And we remember you being pretty decent too. Kiss kiss – LC

STALKER

From: Sally
To: *NME*

"This was such a brilliant gig! Me and my best friend Michaela got to The View's Nottingham show really early so we could get to the front. When we got a photo with Pete after the gig he noticed my *Mighty Boosh* iPhone case and started singing the theme tune to us!"

Web Slinging

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

BEADY EYE'S NEW SONGS ARE "A LOT BETTER"

Liam Gallagher has spoken about Beady Eye's new songs, describing them as "a lot better" than those on 2011 debut album 'Different Gear, Still Speeding'. Asked how the band's second album was progressing, Gallagher declared: "It's sounding good. We've got a bit more writing to do, but we'll go in and record some time this year." Gallagher also described how the second album would move on from their debut, saying: "The first album came straight off the back of Oasis splitting up and we just wanted to be in a band again, so we just went straight in and did it. This time, we're taking our time a bit. We're not worried with having to be out there, we'll be there when the songs are absolutely bang on." The frontman finished by saying he thinks the band's new songs "have to be" better this time round...

Best of the responses...

I've got more talent for songwriting than Liam Gallagher, but sadly for me that's not really saying a lot. Luckily, he's working with some decent musicians so Beady Eye's second album might actually be half decent.
Anthon E John

It's a shame that so many so-called Oasis fans won't give them a chance simply because Noel isn't there. If he'd written 'Four Letter Word', 'Millionaire' and 'The Morning Son' the pro-Noel Brigade would be saying those songs are great.
Carl Robert Chatwin

Beady Eye's first album was good, not great. They were trying to get away from Oasis' sound, which will always be difficult.
Terry White

Listening to the musical abortion that was 'Different Gear...', it really is clear to see who the real talent was in Oasis.
Andy Lawrence

Andy Bell should definitely call Mark Gardener for a Ride reunion instead of wasting his time in this poor band.
En Blanc Au Vél

CACK BLACK

From: Andrew Daley
To: *NME*

Your review of Tenacious D's album 'Rize Of The Fenix' was totally ridiculous. 0/10? Fuck off. In that review he gave no review of the musical aspects of the album whatsoever. Just bitching about Jack Black and *School Of Rock*. It was a really childish and pathetic review. I'd be embarrassed of the person who wrote that. It wasn't a music or album review in the slightest. It was simply someone trying to be funny and in the process they just made a prat of themselves. Please forward this to the prat who wrote that article. If you can even call it that. They should be embarrassed.

From: *NME*
To: Andrew Daley

The 'prat' in question was Hamish MacBain, and here's what he has to say in response to you, Andrew: "I wish I could turn back time and change that review. Mainly because I definitely would have included the sentence, 'It was simply someone trying to be funny and in the process they just made a prat of themselves', which on reflection does a far better job of summing up my feelings for the record than any contained within the review printed" – LC

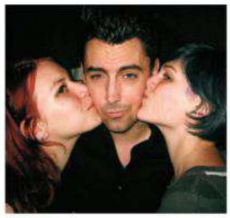
CONFUSED BY MUSE?

From: Daniel Bather
To: *NME*

One constant thought I carried with me throughout the whole build-up to the Olympics was that Muse should make the anthem. The grandiose theme of the event always seemed to play right into Muse's style of music so imagine my excitement when they are given the chance to concoct their own take on the Olympic anthem. Yes, I had heard 'The Resistance' and, like all right-thinking people, I ran to the hills from rubbish like 'Undisclosed Desires' but I still believed they could do it. However, ever since 'Survival' hit the airwaves I've been a wreck. Here was the band that had fused space dance-rock with Spaghetti Western prog anthems on 'Black Holes & Revelations' reduced to making the most incoherent, pretentious Muse-by-numbers track I've ever heard with the most godawful Primary School-inspired lyrics tacked on.

From: *NME*
To: Daniel Bather

Shoulda just re-released 'Muscle Museum', eh? – LC



STALKER

From: Angi
To: *NME*

"My friend, Hanna (left) and I were waiting for Lostprophets after an amazing gig at Volt Festival in Hungary and this happened! Look at Ian's face!! I had a shirt on saying 'I love Jamie and Ian', which the band talked about between songs. I guess that helped to convince him for the photo!"

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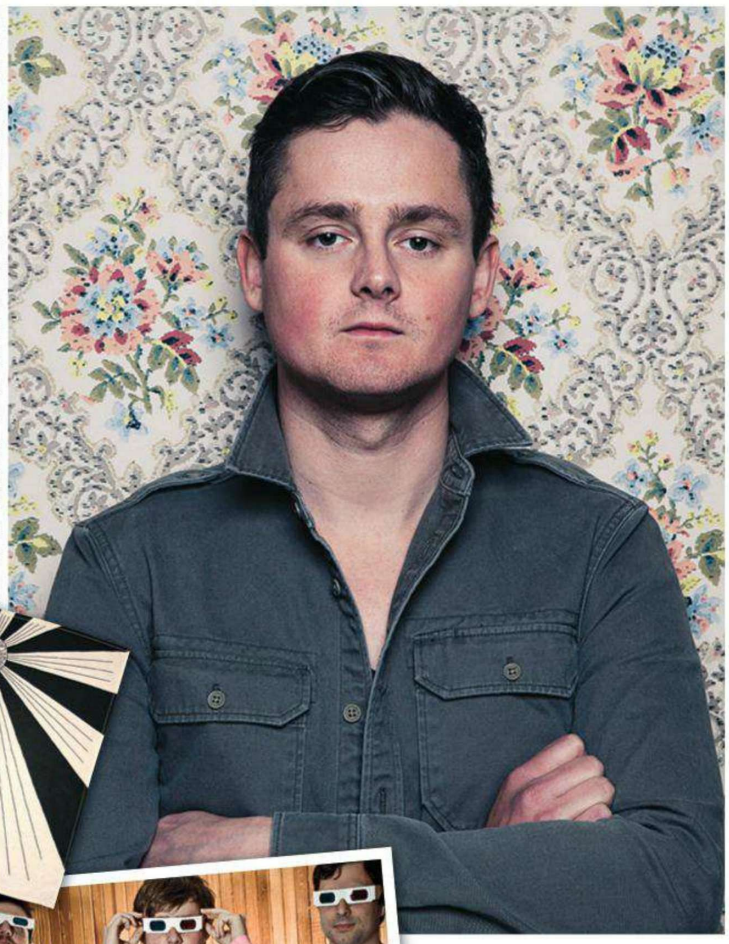
DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

TOM CHAPLIN
KEANE

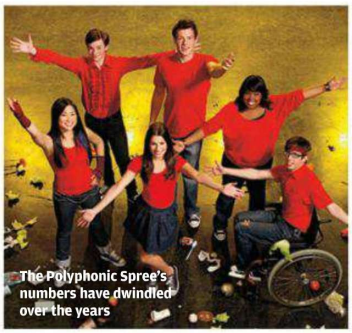


QUESTION 1

Which Keane song has appeared in an episode of Glee?

"Shamefully, I have to admit it was 'Somewhere Only We Know'. There was nothing we could do about it."

Correct



The Polyphonic Spree's numbers have dwindled over the years

QUESTION 2

The Conservative Party used 'Everybody's Changing' during their General Election campaign in 2010, which you weren't happy about. Name three bands who featured in David Cameron's Desert Island Discs in 2006

"I don't think Keane appeared. I think The Killers. What would he have said? He'll have picked Coldplay, won't he?"

Wrong. Radiohead's 'Fake Plastic Trees', The Smiths' 'This Charming Man', REM's 'Perfect Circle', The Killers' 'All These Things That I've Done' and some other rubbish ones

QUESTION 3

You covered U2's 'With Or Without You' at Glastonbury 2010 in acknowledgement of U2's absence. What other band covered U2 at Glasters that year?

"I can never remember what happened at Glastonbury for reasons I shan't mention. Muse played. But what song?"

Correct. The Edge (right) joined Muse to play 'Where The Streets Have No Name'

"Do we look cool now? No??"

QUESTION 4

Who sings the line "Raise a glass for everyone" after your first line "Here's to you" in Band Aid 20's 'Do They Know It's Christmas'?

"Actually, probably me. [Producer] Nigel Godrich once told me that when he comp-ed the vocals together, he used my vocals for most of the song. Was it The Darkness?"

Correct. It was Justin Hawkins from The Darkness

QUESTION 5

You played the world's first live 3D webcast in 2009 and gave away a pair of 3D glasses with the single 'Better Than This'. What colour were the lenses?

"Hm. Was the right side blue and the left side red?"

Wrong. Left: blue; right: red

QUESTION 6

You've appeared on Friday Night With Jonathan Ross three times. Name a fellow guest per visit.

"Ricky Gervais was definitely on. Matt Lucas and David Walliams. Simon Pegg. And Noel Edmonds. I remember sitting next to him. He looked very strange. He looked like he'd walked straight out of Madame Tussauds."

Correct

QUESTION 7

How much does a Keane tea towel cost from Keanemusic.com?

"We do lots of kitchenalia. We do aprons. We do tea towels. Actually, I think we're doing a Frisbee now. It would be extortionate to charge more than £10. I'm going to say £8."

Correct. Do you dry your dishes on nothing but Keane tea towels?

"I haven't got one. I really should raid the merch stand."

QUESTION 8

Who did you have on your T-shirt when you appeared on Soccer AM in May 2010?

"Grace Jones?"

Correct

Grace Jones has a Tom Chaplin T-shirt

QUESTION 9

Name three songs from 'Mt Desolation', the collaboration album Tim and Jesse from Keane made with Ronnie from The Killers.

"'Departure', 'My My My', and 'Annie Ford'."

Correct. Are you annoyed your bandmates went off and made an album without you?

"No. I'm a fan."

QUESTION 10

The cover of Keane's debut album 'Hopes And Fears' was green in the UK, black in Europe, white in America, red in the rest of the world, but what colour in Japan?

"Blue?"

Correct

Total Score
8/10

"I always thought all I could remember were song lyrics. If I can remember anything else, that's remarkable."

WORDS: RICH PELLEY PHOTOS: PA, REX

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